# TELOS

Number 64 Summer 1985

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# REVOLUTION AND LEGITIMACY

## by Luciano Pellicani

*"The difference between revolutionary power and naked power is less obvious than it appears at first sight" —*
Bertrand Russell

Twenty years ago Julien Freund wrote: "We should be grateful to Guglielmo Ferrero for having once again drawn the attention of political science to the importance of the notion and principles of legitimacy, the fight for which, in his view, constituted the invisible basis of history."[1] Freund's gratitude was a little premature. Political science — above all American political science — continues to ignore Ferrero. Even the renewed interest in the sociological analysis of revolutionary phenomena has failed to bring Ferrero's work back into the limelight,[2] despite the fact that Ferrero has provided the most instructive interpretation yet on the totalitarian dynamics of revolutionary power.

*The Principle of Legitimacy*

Ferrero starts out from the idea that man's most basic feeling is fear of death. This fear never leaves him and so conditions his life that the innermost essence of his personality is to be found "in the tactics and strategy that he uses in his fight against death."[3]

Civilization, which is the complex of techniques, institutions and symbolic universes that man creates in order to have (artificial) conditions of relative stability and security, stems from mans' fear of nature (mysterious and therefore threatening), of others (real or imaginary enemies), and of the future (a perennial source of concern and worry). Religion, politics, war, laws, morals, etc. are all attempts, continually repeated because imperfect, to eliminate fear by removing or at least reducing to a minimum any element of instability or uncertainty in the human condition. This brings Ferrero to define civilization as a "school of courage"[4] and to interpret it in a way strikingly similar to that of Freud and his followers. For Ferrero, as for them, it is a system of protective shells, of cultural niches, within which men feel less exposed to life's dangers, real or imagined.[5]

1. J. Freund, *L'essence du Politique* (Paris, 1965), pp. 254-260.
2. This is not to overlook, however, *Potere fra Paura e Legitimità*, (Milano, 1983), and the bibliography on Ferrerian works he provides. Attention should also be paid to the work by A. Cavicchia Scalamonti, "La Paura e il Potere" edited by G. Penso, *Potere*, (Rome, 1985).
3. G. Ferrero, *Potere*, (Milan, 1981), p. 2, 344.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 44.
5. Note especially G. Roheim, *Origine e Funzione della Cultura*, (Milan, 1972) and T. Reik, *Il*



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"Placed at the peak of nature and of life, man is the being that feels and inspires the most fear, since he is the only living being to have the idea, the obsession, of the obscure pit towards which the flow of life is directed — death — since he is in fact the only living being who can make the instruments for destroying life. Knowing that he can die at any moment, and that one day he will have to die, he sees dangers of death everywhere . . . . "Power is the supreme expression of the fear that man has of himself, in spite of his efforts to rid himself of it. This is perhaps the deepest and most obscure secret of history. Even in the poorest and most ignorant societies a rudiment of authority can be found. The basic structure of the state is always the same: leaders who give orders and judge, soldiers and policemen who make sure that the will and the laws of the leaders are enforced, the masses who, either spontaneously or by force, obey. Humanity never has, and never will, organize its life in any other way, the simple reason being that men are afraid of each other most of all because of the arms which they themselves have made to defend themselves.."[6]

The function of power — the institutionalization of the command-obedience relations existing in every society, primitive or complex — is then to free men from the fear they have of each other. But, here lies a paradox fraught with terrible consequences. In order to carry out the function for which it was created — the maintenance of internal peace and the defence of the community from external enemies — it is *forced to be frightening*. The result, power, in the attempt to eliminate the fear which man has of his fellow man, creates another type of fear, the *fear of power itself*. The paradox becomes even greater, for not only is power forced to induce fear in order to allay the prospect of war of all against all, power itself is dominated by fear: *The fear of revolt by those who are under its imperative jurisdiction.*

As Ferrero states so forcefully, "There never has been nor will there ever be a power that is absolutely sure of always being supported completely. All powers know, and always have known, that revolt is latent even in cases of absolute subjection, and that it can explode at any moment, driven by circumstances that cannot be foreseen. There is no power that has not felt itself to be precarious, and the extent to which it feels this is directly proportionate to the force with which it had to impose its rule."[7]

In short, power, generated by the fear which men have of each other,[8] is forced to induce fear in order to be obeyed. It is consequently dominated in

*Trauma della Nascita*, (Bologna, 1973).

6. Ferrero, *Potere, op. cit.*, p. 36 and p. 38.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 41.
8. The thesis of the original mutual hostility between men is not accepted by those who believe that human nature is a sort of empty slate on which culture can write up its codes of behavior. But even if this were the case, the fact remains that precisely because man is not a "fixed being" (Nietzsche) his behavior is unforseeable, and therefore objectively dangerous. This objective peril explains why we find some form of greeting in all societies. This is "a proof of the awareness of men of being a risk for one another." Cf. J. Ortega y Gasset, *L'Homo e la Gente* (Milan, 1978), p. 186.

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turn by the fear of a revolt of those governed, a fear that Elias Canetti has called the "anguish of command."[9]

What a terrible contradiction! Power satisfies a universal need for security, and at the same time it is quite prepared to resort to any means at its disposal, including terror, to ensure permanence. Here is seen the dual nature of power: on the one hand, it is an institution that protects and keeps society united; on the other, it is a machine that oppresses and exploits its subjects. This unavoidable ambiguity has led Maurice Duverger to compare it to Janus: both protective and oppressive, altruistic and selfish, serving the people's general interests, while expressing the particular interests of classes.[10]

Yet history, that relentless witness, reminds us that the state was born from the violent subjugation of one people by another — i.e., by a military conquest — and from the subsequent transformation of the defeated into servants of the conquerors.[11] As Bertrand Russell noted,[12] incredible though it seems, not only do the conquerors frequently manage to have their domination accepted as a natural fact, they also win even the love of their subjects through that cultural-historical process that Bertrand de Jouvenal has called "symbiosis." "The dominator exists thanks to the society it dominates; it is through this society that the dominator can maintain luxury, feed his strength, reward loyalty, and pursue those objectives suggested to him by his ambition. But one can equally correctly state that power owes its consolidation to the fact that it has protected the conquered, its strength to the fact that it knew how to deserve loyal servants, creating a general disposition towards obedience, its resources to the prosperity it created. Both statements are correct. Power originated in customs and beliefs, developed its own apparatus, and multiplied its own resources, because it used existing conditions to its advantage. On the other hand, it achieved this result only by serving society. It never had any scope other than power, but the path to power is through services rendered."[13]

Now, once the symbiotic process between dominators and dominated is more or less complete, power is transformed. From being based almost entirely on fear induced by its formidable coercive apparatus, it becomes accepted, supported, and in the best cases, loved by the subjects. Consequently, the dominators no longer need to use fear to be obeyed, for they no longer fear revolt.

9. E. Canetti, *Massa e Potere*, (Milan, 1972), p.338.

10. M. Duverger, *Introduction à la politique*, (Paris, 1964), p. 22. This concept of power is accepted almost universally. The only exception is Marxism, which sees only one of Janus' faces, the repressive, classist one, and does not take the protective and reassuring face into account. Still, the latter is far more important, since only thanks to it can men live together in peace and exorcise the ghost of fear. Still, this weakness in the Marxian sociology of power did not escape Gramsci, who thanks to the influence of Gaetano Mosca's *Elements of Political Science* rectified this. Gramsci's now-famous theory of hegemony underlines the fact that the supremacy of one class over another is expressed not only as a domination, but also as "intellectual and moral direction."

11. See F. Oppenheimer's classic *The State* (Montreal, 1975).

12. Bertrand Russell, *Authority and the Individual* (London, 1969), p. 31.

13. B. de Jouvenal, *Potere* (Milan, 1947), pp. 108-109.

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Hobbes was therefore correct when he claimed that the *conditio sine qua non* of social peace was the existence of a sovereign able to ensure the respect of the laws, and therefore one capable of assuaging the ever-present fear of a *bellum omnium contra omnes*. What he did not realize was that a power based solely on coercion could never free man from fear, but would rather force him to live in permanent terror.

What, then, is the essential requisite of power if it is to fulfill its historic mission, which is to quell fear? Ferrero's answer is *legitimacy*, or rather the exercise of command according to principles shared by both the governors and the governed. He writes: "The principles of legitimacy are justifications of power, that is, of the right to command. Such justifications are an essential requisite of social order, since of the many inequalities between men, none have such far-reaching consequences, and hence such need for justification, as the inequality deriving from power. With only rare exceptions, all men are equal, so why should one have the right to command and the other to obey? The principles of legitimacy answer this question."[14] If those principles are accepted without serious reservation, they provide moral sanction for the dialectic of command and obedience, which is the basis for social peace. The commander is not seen as a usurper, but rather as someone exercising a right. To obey his orders is a duty. He is thus freed from the "anguish of command."

We can say, then, with Ferrero, that "at the very heart of the principles of legitimacy is the capacity to *exorcise fear*, the mysterious mutual fear that always arises between power and its subjects . . . . The most important organ of society, government, can attain its perfect state, legitimacy, only be means of a sort of unspoken contract. The principles of legitimacy are simply the different formulas of that unspoken contract. Each principle of legitimacy lays down a certain number of rules for the attainment and for the exercise of power: the unspoken contract is based on these rules, and on the mutual commitment that as long as power is attained and exercised by the governors according to the rules agreed on, the subjects will obey. Every principle of legitimacy implies, therefore, from the time in which it is accepted either actively or passively, the task of obeying on condition that certain rules are observed. It is a contract. If either party fails to respect the contract, the principle of legitimacy is no longer valid, and gives security neither to power, nor to the subjects. Fear is reborn."[15]

This ultimately leads Ferrero to define the principles of legitimacy as the *invisible genies of the City*. They "resemble those intermediate beings between divinities and men, which the Romans referred to as genies, and which they imagined to be always vigilant among men, ready to act in their favor, or against them, beings that were neither visible nor corporeal. Because of this, we all too often ignore their presence and their very existence. And yet it is the genies that regulate our lives: when they languish, men suffer; when they are in conflict, men fight against each other and blood flows in great abundance;

14. G. Ferrero, *Potere, op. cit.*, p. 27.
15. *Ibid.*, pp. 45-46, 48.

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when they plot and intrigue, men are disoriented; when they die of violence or of inactivity, a great fear takes hold of all spirits and terrified men fall victim to slavery and folly. When, on the other hand, the genies are strong and healthy, from them comes what little peace, justice, order and well-being that men are granted and allowed to enjoy."[16]

Naturally, a principle of legitimacy cannot be established cold, nor does it impose itself on the basis of its intrinsic form. On the contrary, it works only if it is in harmony with the mores, the religion, the mentality and the economic interests of a specific period.

The choice of a principle of legitimacy is never governed by chance. Strictly speaking, it is not a choice at all, for its function, which is to "ritualize" the conflicts of interest, establish who has the right to be in command, set the limits of the imperative jurisdiction of power, fix the rights and duties of the governors and of the governed, can only be carried out if it is lived as a belief, or more precisely as a dogma, which nobody questions since — because it is in perfect harmony with the existing institutionalized modes of thought and feelings — it appears entirely "natural."

We can thus agree with Godelier that "of the two elements which together make up power of domination, *the strongest factor is not the violence of the dominators*, but the *ideological consent* of the dominated."[17] Consequently, the foundation of legitimate power is of a spiritual nature. This *idem sentire de re publica*, or state of public opinion — "the general orientation of spirits," as Ferrero calls it — has at its foundations the *idem sentire de mundo*. If this is not the case, then the issue of command is far less clear. If, in addition to this, the unspoken contract also is violated, then the Hobbesean state of nature re-emerges and men discover to their detriment that social peace depended on ethereal, intangible elements: beliefs, myths, values, norms.

*The Great Fear*

Nothing shows better than the French Revolution the validity of the theorem that Ferrero formulates in *Potere*: "When the legality of a social body is destroyed, even though the destruction may be justified by the vices or the weaknesses of that legality, fear invades everyone: the first to feel fear are the destroyers themselves, and the panic, which starts from them, spreads to others."[18]

There is no doubt that the French Revolution marks a turning point in European history: It proclaimed loud and clear the values that make up the nucleus of the code of modern civilization. As Albert Soboul said, the French Revolution is "*mere a nous tous*."[19] The French Revolution threw all of Europe into the void of an atrocious civil war, tore open the moral innards of France, and, despite its promises of freedom, for about a century generated monstruous regimes instead, regimes totally lacking in legitimacy and, precisely

16. *Ibid.*, pp. 22-23.
17. Maurice Godelier, *Anthropologia e Marxismo* (Rome, 1977), p. 20.
18. Ferrero, *op. cit.*, p. 316.
19. A. Soboul, *Comprendre la révolution* (Paris, 1981), p. 349.

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because of this, filled with prisoners of fear. Moreover, the revolution fed the illusion that the victories of liberal democracy were to be attributed to the destruction of legality and the waging of a class war. According to Ferrero, this illusion derives from the semantic ambiguity of the word "revolution."

In *Les deux Revolutions Françaises*, Ferrero writes, "by revolution we mean a new orientation of the human spirit, a door to the future. It is in this sense that we speak of Christianity as being the greatest revolution of humanity, since it introduced the principle of equality among men and substituted polytheism with the monotheism of the Jews. But by the word revolution we also mean the collapse and overturning of a previous legality, the total or partial subversion of established rules. What is legality? It is the system of laws that govern relations between members of a community, between governors and governed. Order reigns as long as it is recognized and respected. However, legality can never be permanent. There is always a segment of the population that is against it. When that segment rebels and tries to destroy legality, then there is a revolution."[20]

The first type of revolution coincides with the formation and the diffusion of a new *ethos*. This gradually wins over the populace — at first a very small minority, then spreads its enthusiasm to the masses and converts them to the new values. As soon as this occurs, the first issue on the agenda becomes the reform of the institutional structure within which all the social life occurs. This revolution goes forward very slowly, since the masses are by nature conservative; it is also a "silent" revolution, in which so-called "noisy" episodes are rare, or at any rate, of little importance.

The second type of revolution is entirely different. It is destructive: it overthrows the norms governing political life and tramples on the principle of legitimacy that supports and gives life to those norms. This revolution can take place in the space of a few days, with results that are immediate and upsetting, for by destroying legality, the whole of society is thrown into chaos. When this second type of revolution explodes, it is traumatic for all: people suddenly discover that they can no longer trust one another, the unspoken contract is of no value, and fear dominates society, drastically altering all behavior.

And so we have two entirely different kinds of revolution: one a new general orientation of spirits, and the other a sudden destruction of legality. Due to a particular circumstance in history, 1789 witnessed the simultaneous occurrence of two revolutions. Because of this, people came to believe that the two phenomena were very closely linked. Thus, a fortuitous event — the taking of the Bastille — was seen as a response to a historical necessity, while the destruction of legality — the "noisy" revolution — was interpreted as the cause of the "silent" revolution. This idea spread like the plague, creating what was in effect a truly revolutionary theory.[21] This idea is to say the least, original,

20. G. Ferrero, *Les deux Revoltuions Françaises* (Neuchatel, 1951), p. 17.

21. Marx cleverly spread this idea. However, in his works themselves we find an explicit rejection of the palingenetic theory on violent revolution. When he writes "that steam, electricity, the

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since the "sudden overthrow of the relations of power, which is what is normally understood as revolution, is not only an unknown phenomenon in history, but also, if we look at it closely, something quite inconceivable, something just as impossible as the scales tipping in favor of a lighter weight. What history has witnessed are transformations of regimes, in which the bloody events that we call revolutions play a secondary role to the point that they could even be lacking altogether."[22]

After Ferrero witnessed the painful destruction of liberal legality that occurred in the fascist revolution, he chose exile, and from there undertook the task of hauling before the court of sociological reason the myth of the "noisy" revolution. His approach follows the pattern of liberal thought begun by Constant and leading to Talmon, but his interpretation of the totalitarian dynamics of violent revolution is particularly original, focusing as it does on a variable — fear — that is generally neglected or, if not, relegated to a position of little importance.[23] Ferrero is thus able to decipher in a novel way the historical complexity of the French Revolution, pushing his interpretation to the point of seeing the political convulsions of the 20th century — the "era of tyrannies," to use Elie Halevy's term[24] — as the direct consequence of the "great schism" and of the mythology it propagated. In the second half of the 18th century, France was in urgent need of an institutional reform. For some time the country had been undergoing a colossal intellectual and moral upheaval whose roots lay in the incipient industrial revolution. The political system of the Ancien Régime seemed less and less capable of containing and satisfying the forces agitating within society. Every class — the bourgeoisie, the intelligentsia, the farmers, even the nobles — agreed on one point: the existing political regime had to be completely restructured. In effect, when the General States met May 6, 1789, they intended to give France that great reform. They had no intention of destroying the legality of the monarchy. All they wanted was simply to alter it, so that it could better meet the structural and cultural changes that had developed. In short, they wanted a constitutional monarchy along the lines of the British model.

But an unexpected and traumatic episode intervened and substituted the "revolution without revolution": the taking of the Bastille, or rather a huge mutiny of the people that mortally wounded the already shaky Ancien Régime, paralyzing it. As if at a pre-arranged signal, the entire population simply refused to obey the constituted authorities. "Never before in the history of the Western world had there been spiritual contagion so great and so unexpected: within a few weeks, in the center of Europe and during a period of absolute

mechanical spinning machine have been revolutionaries far more dangerous even than citizens such as Barbes, Raspail and Blanqui" he is saying that the real revolution is the "silent" revolution — or rather the scientific/technological revolution — and not the "noisy" one. On this point see the important work by D. Settembrini, *Due l potesi per il Socialismo in Marx ed Engels* (Bari, 1974).

22. S. Weil, *Oppressione e Libertà* (Milano, 1956), p. 114.
23. Among the rare exceptions we should note Franz Neumann's essay *Anguish and Politics*.
24. E. Halevy, *The Era of Tyrannies* (New York, 1965).

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peace, one of the greatest historical edifices ever built by humanity suddenly collapsed. One of the oldest and most sophisticated societies of the world suddenly disintegrated before the eyes of the world. It simply woke up one morning to find itself without an army, without justice, without policy, without an administration, without laws, without even a vestige of order with which to cover itself."[25]

In the four weeks following the taking of the Bastille the French Revolution became "something else." It could no longer limit itself to reforming existing institutions. It had to do something far more radical and basic. It had to rebuild the order that had dissolved as if by magic, and it had to do it in a situation of *absolute anomie.*

The paralysis of the state and the violation of the unspoken contract had automatically produced "in the upper classes a fear of the masses, and in the masses a fear of the upper classes."[26] What Ferrero calls real "persecution mania"[27] took hold on all sides, increasing their aggressiveness beyond all proportion. To ward off the blows they were afraid of receiving at any moment, they reached the logical conclusion that there was only one way to solve the problem: to strike first, to strike anyway, to strike always.[28]

Thus the civil arena became a military arena. It was the war of all for all. Because of an incident that no one had anticipated or even desired, France "entered the diabolical cycle of fear: terror, *coups d'etat,* revolutionary dictatorships internally; invasions, wars without rules, and interminable absurd peaces externally."[29] This being the case, we can, indeed we must, interpret 1789 as being an "abscess of fear"[30] that terrified first France and then all Europe. After treading on all the traditional rules and ignoring all the unspoken agreements (both internal and international), the Revolution started the Great Fear. Everything became precarious, uncertain, unpredictable.

Moreover, the situation was dominated by a terrible dualism: the dualism of the *invisible genies of the City.* The principle of monarchic legitimacy — the belief in the divine right of the sovereign — had indeed grown old, but it was not by any means dead. Quite the contrary, even though the principle of democratic legitimacy — the proclamation of popular sovereignty — had received the enthusiastic support of those who had thought it up and were preaching it, it had not yet become a collective fact. A compromise between

25. Ferrero, *Potere, op. cit.*, pp. 94-95.
26. Ferrero, *Les deux Revolutions Françaises, op. cit.*, p. 36.
27. Ferrero, *Potere, op. cit.*
28. This is exactly what Engels meant when he wrote, in a letter to Marx (Sept. 4, 1870): "La *terreur* consists of cruelties which for the most part are useless, committed by people who are scared themselves, so as to calm down. I am convinced that the fault of the regime of terror of year 1793 is almost entirely to be attributed to the terrified bourgeois, assuming the air of the patriot, and to the philistines who were wetting their pants out of fear, and to the mass of subproletarians, who were minding the own affairs." Unfortunately, this opinion was never made public. The official doctrine of Marx and Engels was quite different. They claimed that terror was an essential instrument for purifying society from the bourgeois spirit. See my *Miseria del Marxismo* (Milano, 1984).
29. Ferrero, *Ricostruzione* (Milano, 1948), pp. 379-380.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 14.

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the new and the old *elites* might well have been able to remedy this dualism, as had happened in Great Britain during the Glorious Revolution of 1688, had not the Great Fear — an inevitable consequence of the destruction of legality — caused the rift between the genies of the Ancien Régime and those of the Revolution to become final, declared and irreparable. In such a manner exploded "the war of extermination between two principles of legitimacy."[31]

In this situation, no government could appear legitimate to public opinion. Thus, the following paradox emerged: the revolutionaries were unable to govern by coherently applying the principle of democratic legitimacy, since they felt that they were deeply hated not only by the classes they had removed from power, but also by a large segment of the people on behalf of whom they were speaking and acting.[32]

Since the "silk threads" — the norms contained in the unspoken contract — had been broken, and since the genies of the Revolution had not yet acquired the status of generalized belief, the revolutionaries were forced to resort to "iron chains"[33] — that is, the widespread and random use of violence — to re-establish the order that had been destroyed. And as if this were not enough, the Revolution itself became two revolutions, each one a denial of the other: the revolution of '89, and the revolution of '99, the revolution for the rights of man and the revolution of Year 8, the revolution of the representative regime, the dictatorship of the totalitarian state, the revolution whose roots lay in the 18th century and the revolution created by the terror that arose after the Bastille."[34]

As is evident from this, Ferrero was the first to understand that the French Revolution was by no means a monolithic bloc, as the historians of his time believed. In his reconstruction of the French Revolution, he sees it as being dominated by a pair of dualisms: that between the stated objectives (popular sovereignty, freedom, equality, brotherhood) and the means used (terror and wars of conquest to exorcise the Great Fear), and that between the liberal revolution and the totalitarian revolution. Both dualisms were the direct result of the anomie produced by the sudden institutional paralysis that followed the taking of the Bastille. The simultaneous disintegration of support and of legality made impossible a peaceful passage from monarchic legitimacy to democratic legitimacy, or rather, "a revolution without revolution."[35]

Thus did France find itself suspended "in the void between the monarchy,

31. Ferrero, *Potere, op. cit.*, p. 110.

32. Cromwell clearly saw the paradox of revolution: "It is a duty to govern with the consent of the people, but how can this be done if they withhold consent?" he asked after taking power. His answer was typical of all revolutionaries: to smother freedom in all its forms.

33. Ferrero, *Ricostruzione, op. cit.*, p. 395.

34. Ferrero, *Potere, op. cit.*, p. 234.

35. *Ibid.* "Revolution with revolution" is the liberal-democratic method, based on compromise and reforms; or, if one prefers the definition of Harold Lasky, is it *revolution by consent*. Ferrero considered Great Britain to be a perfect model to follow, as it was the only European state that had avoided the song of the revolutionary siren, without adopting the reactionary route.

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which was no longer possible, and democracy, which was not yet possible,"[36] and fell into that void, the void of Great Fear.

*From the Great Fear to Revolutionary Totalitarianism*

At this point Ferrero makes his masterly analysis of revolutionary power which, in his opinion, had its first historical embodiment in Napoleon's Consulate.[37] "The Consulate is the first example of a revolutionary power trying to legalize what was a violation of democratic legitimacy, the suppression of the right of opposition, by inverting the principle of national sovereignty. This is the first time this was attempted, and all revolutionary governments for the next century and a half were to follow this example. The *essence of all the revolutionary governments of the Western world is the inversion of the democratic formula,* carried out for the first time in France by Bonaparte. What this means is that the will of the nation is silenced and directed by that government that was to have been its creature. The nation is said to enjoy sovereignty, but at the same time it is deprived of the essential components of sovereignty, the right of opposition and the freedom to vote. It is a procedure that is absurd, however, and since the principle of legitimacy cannot be a falsification, it has always failed, and always will, wherever it is tried. Even in its period of maximum glory, the revolutionary government — or totalitarian, as they call it now — is still an illegitimate government, which, instead of freeing itself from fear, is its victim more than ever. *Revolutionary government is the regime of fear par excellence.* Its terrible fate is that the more it tries to protect itself, the more frightened it becomes of the real or imaginary dangers that threaten it."[38]

After suppressing legal opposition, was Bonaparte any more at ease? Not at all: now he grew afraid of latent opposition, of criticism that is not evident because it cannot be expressed, but which is there anyway, smoldering in the ashes, waiting for the right moment to leap out. Bonaparte "knows that the people are complaining, but he has broken the gauge of public discontent, and therefore can no longer measure it. He thinks about it all the time, becomes obsessed with it, and ends up believing it to be more serious than it really is. He feels, glimpses, sees signs of hostility everywhere: between the lines of censored newspapers, in conversations in the cafes, in private conversations among friends, in families, behind closed doors . . . . He increases his number of spies, the extent of censorship and supervision. He creates a vast police force to watch over everyone, rich and poor, ignorant and learned, humble and great, but then needs to create another superior police force to

36. *Ibid.*, p. 135.

37. In fact, the first example of totalitarian tyranny was the Jacobin Terror. On June 2, 1793, with the "liquidation" of the moderate wing of the Revolution (the Girondist party) and the taking of power by Robespierre, revolutionary totalitarianism entered the stage of modern history, and has continued to be an important protagonist ever since. But Ferrero does not distinguish between "circumstantial' and "ideological" totalitarianism: the former being that of Napoleon, whom circumstances forced to be totalitarian; the latter that of Robespierre, who was animated by the conviction that terror would make it possible to realize the kingdom of virtue. Cf. my I Rivoluzionari di Professione (Florence, 1975).

38. Ferrero, *Potere, op. cit.*, pp. 218-219.

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watch over the police. He trusts nothing and no one . . . . To defend himself, there is one solution: to increase one's own power, to increase it all the time and more and more. He starts monopolizing power in every sector: he must control industry, agriculture, commerce. And still he is not satisfied: he needs to control families, customs, social life, hygiene, cooking, artistic taste. He intends to act as the supreme judge of what is beautiful and what is ugly, to dominate all intellectual life from school to the academy. His rule becomes totalitarian. Totalitarian is the most extreme expression of the fear tormenting the revolutionary government."[39]

What was behind this obsession which led Napoleon to create, probably without wishing to do so, the first totalitarian state of modern times? In light of Ferrero's theory of power, there can be no doubt as to the answer: *lack of legitimacy*. Napoleon had no political theory that was in harmony with the public consensus and that therefore could justify his power. In his favor he had only the state of emergency in which France found herself, and his military successes.[40] He was therefore a usurper, and like all usurpers, he could not shake free of fear, since he knew that he had to govern without the support of his subjects and without the moral approval of public opinion.

A legitimate government does not need propaganda or public manifestations of consent and approvals since it has no hidden fear of criticism or of murmurs of discontent. It knows that it is supported by the spontaneous consent of the people — a consent that is sincere and without any basic or important reservations.

Even consolidated despotism, despotism legitimized by the sacredness of the "eternal yesterday," can show its true face and act according to its principles, whereas "revolutionary government, which claims to be the expression of the free and sincere will of the people, has to disguise its tyranny with a parody of freedom, rendering the tyranny even more odious."[41] For this reason it can never be at peace. It knows that each day it treads upon the principles in the name of which it governs, and it also knows that "in the eyes of at least a part of the people its power is not sufficiently justified. It is not content to smother the murmurs and the criticism, but rather hires hands, minstrels, who become increasingly noisy, to sing its praises at every corner. The chief is a genius, a hero, a great man, a semi-god, and all his ministers, collaborators, friends and agents are part of his almost divine nature, as long as they serve him (though they become monsters when for some reason they fall from grace). Under his government the people enjoy every possible happiness, even when they are dying of starvation. 'As false as a bulletin' was one of the sayings at the time of the First Empire. There is no lie that can beat that of a revolutionary government."[24]

39. *Ibid.*, pp. 219-220.

40. Talleyrand told Napoleon, who could never understand why he was not able to consolidate his power: "with bayonets you can do everything, except one thing: you cannot sit on them."

41. Ferrero, *Potere, op. cit.*

42. *Ibid.*, p. 223.

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Finally, Napoleon invented the policy of planned terror. He was the first to exploit the fact that a terrorist act that misses its objective creates in public opinion a kind of temporary void, during which even the most hateful laws can be silently passed, in the same way that hidden goods can be smuggled right under the nose of a sleepy customs official.

He also realized that the presence of mysterious, hidden, terrible enemies, said to be conspiring against the people, justifies the request of the government to be allowed to introduce exceptional despotic measures, making its power virtually unlimited and absolute. "The good of the nation" requires the temporary suspension of all rights and liberties, to be restored only after a complete and final defeat of the enemies of the revolution. In this sense, William Godwin is right: "Revolution is caused by indignation against tyranny; however, revolution itself is always heavy with tyranny. At the time of the revolution, when everything is upside down, there is fear even of the influence of speech, and the resulting slavery is total."[43]

Totalitarian logic is buried in the illegitimate nature of revolutionary power. Tormented by the fear of a revolt of those it governs, knowing that it does not have the right to demand spontaneous obedience, it is condemned to create a void around itself, to eliminate every other power, to silence and maneuver public opinion (of which it claims to be spokesman, but which in fact it fears), to terrify dissidents (real or imagined) with it formidable coercive apparatus, to squash by every means possible its declared enemies, to be suspicious even of its most staunch supporters, to systematically falsify everything so as to give the people an edifying image of its policy. What this means is that revolutions do not "go crazy" because revolutionaries betray their ideals. They do so because revolutionary power lacks the only element that can exorcize fear: the support of the government. Thus, it is obliged to make the state of emergency permanent and transform society into a sort of "besieged fortress" in which everthing must be subordinate to the demands of an all-out war between the revolution and its wicked enemies. For this reason, Lenin, the most complete and logical incarnation of the revolutionary spirit, used to say, *"a la guerre comme a la guerre."*[44]

43. W. Godwin, "Research on Political Justice," in G.M. Bravo, ed., *The Anarchists* (Turin, 1971), Vol. 1, p. 202.
44. Lenin, "Lettera agli Operai Americani," in *Opere Complete* (Rome, 1955),Vol. 28, p. 69.

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# ADORNO'S ANTHROPOLOGY

## by Stefan Breuer*

Anniversary commemorations are ambivalent events, particularly when they celebrate philosophers. Such commemorations focus on a life's work and occasionally contribute to its elucidation. However, they frequently do violence to those they intend to honor, by emphasizing primarily those aspects of a thinker's work which make him acceptable to the spirit of the age. And such was the fate of Theodor Adorno, whose eightieth birthday was observed in 1983 at a major conference, held in Frankfurt, West Germany. There his interpreters, embarked on the task of rediscovering, brought out important aspects and opened up new perspectives. But the heart of Adorno's work, the negative dialectic, encountered outright resistance. The celebration acknowledged the theoretician of 'non-violent communication' (Wellmer) and of 'relations of universal understanding' (Bruckhorst), not the analyst of late capitalist society and its blinding mechanisms. One could even hear that: "The negative dialectic as an 'ontology of the false condition' cannot be salvaged."[1]

Given this reception, it is necessary to recall that the incriminated 'ontology of the false condition'[2] was not merely arrived at by a simple transposition of certain topoi from the critique of idealism into social theory. Adorno's negative ontology and its centerpiece — the 'negative anthropology'[3] — are not the result of some arbitrary initial determinations. Rather, they are the outcome of a continual movement of thought between the central theorems of dialectical social theory (as developed by Hegel and Marx) and the empirical reality of late capitalist social structuration, which Adorno both as social psychologist and as a sociologist of music examined time and again during the course of his life.

Thus, the negative anthropology is not a peripheral element which can be excised from Adorno's oeuvre without serious consequences. Indeed, it is far more correctly seen as the organizing focus of his work — that component

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1. Herbert Schnädelbach, "Dialektik als Vernunftkritik. Zur Rekonstruktion des Rationalen bei Adorno," in Ludwig von Friedeburg and Jürgen Habermas eds., *Adorno-Konferenz 1983* (Frankfurt, 1983), p. 89. For a critque of the discussion of Adorno at that conference see also Helmut König, "Adorno in Wissenschafts-betrieb. Die Adorno-Konferenz in Frankfurt in September 1983," in *Leviethan*, vol. 12, n. 4 (1984), pp. 600-608.

2. Theodor W. Adorno, *Negative Dialektik*, in *Gesammelte Schriften* ed. by Gretel Adorno and Rolf Tiedeman, (Frankfurt, 1970), vol. 6, p. 22. (Hereafter referred to as *Negative Dialektik*).

3. Theodor W. Adorno, *Minima Moralia*, in *Gesammelte Schriften, op. cit.*, vol. 4, p. 188. (Hereafter referred to as *Minima Moralia*).



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which organizes the various parts, and which must be viewed as Adorno's essential contribution to dialectical social theory.

A central feature of dialectical anthropology is the complete absence of a 'first nature.' In contrast to those anthropologists who study primitive societies, Adorno devotes no time to the task with which such anthropologists usually begin, i.e., the description of the natural environment. True, advanced capitalist society remains '*naturverfallen*' — both a repression and therefore a continuation of nature (in a Freudian sense) — but only as the result of a development which presupposes a rupture between society and first nature. Modern society, at any rate, has subjugated and domesticated first nature to such a degree that theory may disregard it.[4]

Rather than following the approach of classical anthropology, Adorno (following Lévi-Strauss) turns immediately to the analysis of the '*structures elémentaires*' which determine the distribution of individuals in society, their relations and customs, rules and institutions. Corresponding to the conditions of a highly industrialized order, however, Adorno located these elementary structures not (as does Lévi-Strauss) in kinship relations, but in the commodity form. According to the Marxian analysis, capitalist society is above all a society of commodity producers, who produce their goods in isolation from one another, and first experience their social relation in the marketplace. There, however, their products do not appear as what they immediately are: manifestations of concrete, useful, and private labor. Instead, they appear in a mediated form: crystallizations of an abstract social structure which constitutes itself behind the backs of the producers, of abstract social labor, which appears in the form of exchange value and whose measure is money. The fundamental fact of modern society is exchange and thus abstraction. "Objective abstraction takes place first in the universal performance of exchange, not in scientific reflection; here originates the disregard for the qualitative specificity of producers and consumers, for the mode of production, even for the needs which the social mechanism satisfies as it were in passing, as a secondary consideration. The primary consideration is profit."[5]

While classical Marxist theory up to and including Lukács tended to see in exchange abstraction and its social realization (reification) a mere appearance which, from the standpoint of production (the 'standpoint of the proletariat') could at any moment be seen through and shattered, Adorno goes one step further. The abstract universality of the value relation is admittedly a mere idea, an 'appearance' or 'illusion,' with respect to production or use value. "At the same time, however, that illusion is the most real thing of all, the magic formula that has bewitched the world."[6] As such, Adorno radicalizes Marx's

4. In this rupture is rooted Adorno's rejection of naive anthropology *à la* Scheler, Plessner or Gehlen. See *Negative Dialektik*, p. 130. Despite this rejection, Adorno did not deny himself the use of the concept of anthropology for his own purposes. See *Minima Moralia*, pp. 28, 176, 261f, 280.

5. Theodor W. Adorno, *Soziologische Schriften*, vol. 1, now in *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 8, *op. cit.*, p. 13. (Hereafter referred to as *Soziologische Schriften*).

6. *Soziologische Schriften*, p. 209.

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notion that the social mediation of labor products which is achieved via the category of value does not remain extrinsic to these products but infiltrates into the organization of production itself during the progressive development of capitalism. While production in pre- and even early-bourgeois society was based on the dominance of use value as the "system-transcending value concept,"[7] advanced capitalist society is characterized by the "totalitarian tendencies of the social order"[8] which, for Adorno, meant less a political process than the totalization of social structuration via the category of value. In the thoroughly-capitalized society, use value is "replaced by pure exchange value, which precisely as exchange value deceptively takes over the function of use value"[9] Use value forfeits its last 'organic' immediacy. Indeed, it dies off, as Adorno put it as early as 1935 in a letter to Benjamin. The forces and relations of production enter into a new synthesis, in which the moment of mediation is clearly determined by the latter. The structural differences between production, circulation, and consumption, which in the early bourgeois period denoted distinct spheres within the social whole (which was only outwardly bound together by the money form, while in truth being determined by production), become obsolete. "Material production, distribution, and consumption are jointly administered. Their boundaries (which once truly separated the spheres from one another, despite their mutual dependency within the total process, and thus respected their qualitative differences), dissolve. All becomes one."[10]

Adorno sees the prerequisite for the possibility of this unification in modern science, which he understands (with Weber and Lukács) as formal, instrumental rationality. Although he vacillates in the derivation of this rationality, Adorno portrays quite clearly the inner relation between its modern form (for which the contents of knowledge are insignificant, while the transcendental categories count for everything) and bourgeois social structuration. The abstractness of formal rationality, its logical absolutism (as Adorno argues, for example, against Husserl) points back to the commodity form, thereby however pointing to the abstractness of the functions which, under bourgeois conditions of production, mediate the formation of the social synthesis.[11] This abstract rationality, which has its innermost principle in linear, uniform, and homogeneous time[12] becomes socially relevant first in the production process which, with the transition from the artisan-manufacturing to the machine-industrial mode of production is 'rationalized,' i.e., standardized

7. Theodor W. Adorno, *Philosophische Terminologie* (Frankfurt, 1974), vol. 2, p. 269. (Hereafter referred to as *Philosophische Terminologie*).

8. *Soziologische Schriften*, p. 16.

9. Theodor W. Adorno, *Dissonanzen; Einleitung in die Musiksoziologie*, in *Gesammelte Schriften, op. cit.*, vol. 14, p. 25. (Hereafter referred to as *Dissonanzen*); and *Aesthetik Theorie*, in *Gesammelte Schriften, op. cit.*, vol. 7, p. 32f. (Hereafter referred to as *Aesthetik Theorie*).

10. *Soziologische Schriften*, p. 369.

11. Theodor W. Adorno, *Zur Metakritik der Erkenntnistheorie*, in *Gesammelte Schriften, op. cit.*, vol. 5, p. 76. (Hereafter referred to as *Metakritik*). See also *Negative Dialektik*, p. 180; and *Vorlesung zur Einleitung in die Erkenntnistheorie* (Frankfurt, 1957-58), p. 266. (Hereafter referred to as *Vorlesung*).

12. *Vorlesung*, p. 314ff.

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and schematized. From there it reaches out into the areas of politics and administration, family and education, art and culture, thus apprehending individuals even in those areas where they are not directly subjugated to the imperatives of technical production and 'production-time.'[13] "The technical labor process has spread from the decisive sector, the industrial, into every aspect of life. Research has yet to sufficiently uncover the stages of mediation by which this has occurred. The technical labor process forms the subjects who serve it, and occasionally one is tempted to say that it quite literally produces them."[14]

With this, the task of a dialectical anthropology is set. Its point of departure is the assumption that the fundamental principle of the industrial-capitalist mode of production, 'schematism,'[15] spreads into the other spheres of society and, in the process, unifies them, although of course one must still take into account the inherent laws of these spheres. That 'all becomes one' in the thoroughly capitalized society does not mean that labor is the same as free-time or that the family is the same administration; it means that they share a common organizational principle, an analogous encoding, which structures each of the various spheres. The task of a dialectical anthropology is to examine the effects of this process on its original subjects, the social individuals, who are "not merely the biological substrate, but simultaneously the reflection form of the social process."[16] What does it mean for individuals when that which critical theory once regarded as 'appearance,' mere surface phenomena, ideology, passes into "the very structure of the crowding and jostling atoms, so to speak into the anthropology itself"?[17] How is this reflection achieved, this turning of the social process back onto individuals? And can one even speak of an *anthropology* any longer in the proper sense of the word, when this process is defined by its abstraction from all that is genuinely human?

An answer to these questions requires first a brief review of the conception of the individual on which Adorno's reflections are based. For this it is not necessary to go back to the highly speculative and justifiably criticized comments (found, e.g., in the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*) on the ur-history of western bourgeois subjectivity. True, Adorno always retained the historical-philosophical conception of a 'logic of disintegration' which was developed in that work as well as in other, even earlier, texts. At the same time, however, he based himself in his concrete analyses so strongly on Marx's social theory that one may safely disregard the ur-historical argumentation with respect to the structure of advanced capitalist society.[18] In his essay on 'Individual and

13. *Soziologische Schriften*, p. 361.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 450.
15. Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *Dialektik der Aufklärung*, in *Gesammelte Schriften* vol. 3, *op. cit.*, p. 144ff. (Hereafter referred to as *Dialektik der Aufklärung*).
16. *Minima Moralia*, p. 259.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 28.
18. Concerning the unmediated simultaneous existence of these two lines of argument, see Joseph E. Schmucker, *Adorno — Logik des Zerfalls* (Stuttgardt-Bad Cannstatt, 1977), p. 75 and p. 107. For a critique of the historical-philosophical line, see Jürgen Habermas, *Theorie des kom-*

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Organization,' for example, he defines the individual as a genuinely modern achievement, not to be dated much earlier than the 16th century, or at most from the early Italian Renaissance.[19] Even in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, where the genesis of the bourgeois subject is traced back to the *Odyssey*, one finds a clear formulation of the insight that individuality and capitalist competition belong together. The individual emerged as the 'power-cell' of economic activity: "Emancipated from the tutelage characteristic of earlier economic stages, the individual now looks out for himself alone: as proletarian, by hiring himself out on the labor market and through continual adaptation to new technical conditions; as entrepreneur, by the untiring embodiment of the ideal-type *homo oeconomicus*."[20]

According to Adorno, the individuality brought forth by competition and the market economy is distinguished by its double character.On the one hand, individuality rests upon affect control and suppression of instincts, upon the denial and repression of the natural dimension for the purpose of self-preservation: the introversion of sacrifice. On the other hand, however, it is precisely this which makes 'civilization' (understood as the free interplay of subjects) possible in the first place. The individual develops anthropological qualities such as foresight and self-responsibility, autonomy and spontaneity. He acquires a certain continuity of consciousness which organizes itself on the basis of a concrete-qualitative sense of time and its manifestations: subjective recollection, experience, and memory. And he achieves a balance — precarious though it may be — between the demands of the instinctual economy and the requirements of reality.[21] Adorno would undoubtedly have agreed with Norbert Elias (whose important investigations into the process of civilization were apparently unknown to him) that modern society rests on the transformation of external compulsion into internal compulsion, and the concomitant possibility of greater differentiation and civility.

But this remains only a possibility. For the same structure which gives rise to the bourgeois individual — the process of social structuration via the category of value — also brings about, according to Adorno, his abolition. The first to suffer this are the workers who, under the compulsion of the profit principle, are granted only limited chances for the development of a differentiated individuality. The "dehumanization brought about by the capitalist production process"[22] not only denies them all pre-conditions for (bourgeois) '*Bildung*,' it simultaneously destroys the possibilities for individuation which were inherent to traditional production processes (even if only in rudimentary form), devaluing productive experience and rendering it superfluous. Concrete and individual time, in which the mediation between the working subject and the natural material took place, disappears from the rationalized

*munikativen Handelns*, (Frankfurt, 1981), vol. 1, p. 506f. Habermas, however, takes into account only this side of Adorno's thinking.

19. *Sozologische Schriften*, p. 450.
20. *Dialektik der Aufklärung*, p. 229; and *Minima Moralia*, p. 167.
21. *Sozologische Schriften*, p. 70f, 138 and 450.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 99.

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labor process. It is replaced by abstract-linear production-time, which runs in "identical and stroke-like, potentially simultaneous cycles," and which has no more need of qualitative, acquired experience.[23] The "quantification of the technical processes," their "dissection into the most minute operations, largely independent of *Bildung* and experience"[24] lets the worker be ever further removed from the final product. Moreover, "the individual labor processes come to approximate one another more and more in their disqualification"[25] so that individuals increasingly regard themselves as interchangeable, as disqualified and virtually superfluous particles. If one further recognizes that, with the progressive incorporation of science and technology into the production process, the share of living labor in this process "sinks tendentially to a minimum,"[26] it becomes clear why Critical Theory can no longer consider political economy as anything but a melancholy science.

However, it is not only the workers who suffer under the destructive effects of the modern rationalization process. The "universal reduction of all specific energy to this single, uniform, abstract form of labor" extends "from the battlefield to the studio" and befalls not only the subjects of production, but those of circulation and consumption as well.[27] Everywhere, individuals see themselves "at the mercy of the course of abstract, mechanical time."[28] consciousness of a temporal continuum, around which individuality had been organized, disintegrates into "discontinuous, shock-like moments" and surrenders the individual to the present instant, to whatever situation he immediately happens to be in. Continuous, methodical action is replaced everywhere by "unresisting and zealous conformity,"[29] the unified and stable ego by psychic discontinuity and incoherence.[30] The subjectively varied modes of experiencing are leveled out and neutralized, since industry strips the subject of the task of synthesis, of the mediation between reality's concrete diversity and rational categoriality.[31] Concepts such as autonomy, spontaneity, criticism are dismissed, and the achievements connected with these concepts are substituted through the 'schema of mass culture,' "which captures even the last internal impulses of its compulsory consumers."[32] The end of the *principium individuationis*, the "abolition of the individual"[33] proclaims itself.

Adorno captures the psychodynamic aspects of this development with the theorem of the increasing organic composition of man. This theorem alludes to the Marxian law of the tendential fall in the rate of profit, according to which

23. *Philosophische Terminologie*, vo. II, p. 270; and *Soziologische Schriften*, p. 230.
24. *Minima Moralia*, p. 218.
25. *Soziologische Schriften*, p. 389.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 359 and p. 236.
27. *Dialektik der Aufklärung*, p. 233.
28. *Dissonanzen*, p. 228.
29. *Dialektik der Aufklärung*, p. 230.
30. *Soziologische Schriften*, p. 189.
31. *Dialektik der Aufklärung*, p. 145.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 229; and *Soziologische Schriften*, p. 138.
33. *Dialektik der Aufklärung*, p. 177.

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capitalist competition leads to a constant revolutionizing of production techniques and to an increase of constant capital, while in contrast to this the share of capital which is engaged for living labor decreases. Although Adorno remained quite skeptical about the theory of economic collapse connected with this law,[34] he carried the basic idea over into anthropology. This change in the technical composition of capital, writes Adorno in *Minima Moralia*, continues within those who are enmeshed in (and actually first constituted by) the technological structure of the production process. Here, too, the proportion of living and dead components shifts in favor of the latter. While Lukács argues that the reification process cannot ultimately transform the human-spiritual essence of the worker into a commodity,[35] Adorno responds that advanced capitalist society is long past the stage where it is a matter of the mere sale of the living: "Only inasmuch as that process, which began with the transformation of labor power into a commodity, thoroughly permeates individuals (*a priori* objectifying all their impulses and simultaneously making them commensurable as variants of the exchange relation) does it become possible for life to reproduce itself under the dominant relations of production. Its complete organization requires the coordination of the quasi-dead."[36] The increasing organic composition of man strikes above all that agency which in early bourgeois society had to establish the equilibrium between the demands of the individual's instinctual economy and the dictates of real self-preservation: the ego. Its position becomes precarious. On the one hand, even advanced capitalist society demands from the individual an abundance of adaptation and balancing achievements which are necessary for the social survival of the individual. On the other hand, the same social order makes these ego-accomplishments tendentially superfluous: in the world of machines and mega-organizations neither moral decision nor reflection are needed, neither the internalization of social norms nor the resolution of one's own instinctual conflicts. Instead, the "prompt, immediate identification with stereotyped scales of value" is demanded and quick, quasi-reflexive reactions.[37] The predominant social character is thus a "subjectless subject," which engages in "self-preservation without a self,"[38] and is characterized by a "scattered, disconnected, interchangeable and ephemeral state of 'informedness' which one can see will be erased the very next moment to be replaced by new information."[38] This demolition process is summarized in the familiar aphorism which is fully misunderstood if interpreted as an arrogant assertion of Adorno's own superiority: "For many individuals it is already an outrage when they use the word 'I.' "[40]

At this point it is necessary to pause and cast a glance at the limits to which,

34. *Soziologische Schriften*, p. 320 and p. 355.
35. Georg Lukács, *Geschichte und Klassenbewusstsein* (Neuwied-Berlin, 1968), p. 356.
36. *Minima Moralia*, p. 260.
37. *Dialektik der Aufklärung*, p. 224; and *Minima Moralia*, p. 262.
38. *Soziologische Schriften*, p. 68.
39. *Ibid.*, p. 115.
40. *Minima Moralia*, p. 55.

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despite everything, the totalization of the abstract, of system rationality, is subjected. In response to the recently-raised objection that Adorno did not distinguish clearly enough between system rationalization and its institutionalization in the 'life-world,' thus underestimating the internal contradictions inherent to this process,[41] it should be pointed out that Adorno was quite aware of such limits and contradictions. For instance, in the somatic, physical moments, which express themselves in suffering from abstraction and reification;[42] in the material, non-intentional, and non-cognitive, which are inseparably bound to the physical existence of man;[43] in the necessity of familial socialization, which always implies the possible development of a 'deviant' individuality, one not completely subjected to social control; and in the unquenchable need for happiness, immediacy, love for non-repressive social relations, freedom from anxiety and pain, for reconciliation with nature.[44] Although the living, under the compulsion of the exchange principle, must make themselves into things, this can never happen completely, so long as the system is dependent on living producers and consumers. There remains an "incompatibility between the system and the individuals of whom it is composed,"[45] an irresolvable contradiction between individuals and the universal, which results from the fact that "the overpowering social processes and institutions still emerged from human ones," and that society, "even in its questionable form, remains the paragon for producing and reproducing human life."[46] Adorno persistently refused to draw from these considerations any conclusions for a positive anthropology which would identify in the existing society the germinating cells of a future non-antagonistic society. However, such considerations were on occasion the basis for hopes which stand in strange contrast to Adorno's insight into the abstractness of the value-structuration of society and point to an undissolved romantic-*lebensphilosophical* residue in Critical Theory: "The rigidity which the spirit mirrors is no natural fated power to which one must humbly bow. It was made by men, it is the final result of an historical process in which men made men into appendages of an opaque machinery. To see through this machinery, to know that the appearance of the inhuman conceals human relations, and to gain control of these rlations themselves are stages in a counter-process, a healing process. When social basis for this rigidity is truly exposed as appearance, then the rigidity itself may disappear. The spirit shall return to life in that moment when it no longer hardens itself in isolation but instead resists the hardness of the world."[47] If any objection can be made against the negative dialectic, then

41. Christoph Deutschmann, "Naturbeherrschung und Arbeitsgesellschaft," in Friedeburg/Habermas, *op. cit.*, p. 335.

42. *Negative Dialektik*, p. 203.

43. *Philosophische Terminologie*, vol. II, p. 177.

44. *Negative Dialektik*, p. 261, 281 and 371. See also Theodor W. Adorno, *Kulturkritik und Gesellschaft*, in *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 10, *op. cit.*, p. 686ff. (Hereafter referred to as *Kulturkritik*).

45. *Soziologische Schriften*, p. 49.

46. *Ibid.*, p. 17; *Aesthetische Theorie*, p. 335; and *Kulturkritik*, vol. II, p. 632.

47. Theodor W. Adorno, *Kritik. Kleine Schriften zur Gesellschaft* (Frankfurt, 1971), p. 33. (Hereafter referred to as *Kritik*).

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it must be that, at times, this dialectic is not negative enough.

However, such utopias, which aspire towards a resurrection of the buried human being, towards a reanimation of the petrified, are fortunately a peripheral element in Adorno's oeuvre. Of far greater comparative significance are the theorems which point out the system-functionality of even those moments which appear not to belong to the system. In contrast to Bloch, for example, who in the pre-fascist period developed his thesis of the 'non-synchronicity' of the capitalist order and believed it possible to mobilize the irrational, archaic-mythic moments for progressive and utopian ends,[48] Adorno stresses from the start the ideological function of these non-synchronous moments. The rationalization process, he argues, fails to remove the irrational moments and institutions only because it needs them as putty, or, to change the metaphor, as a veil to mask the irrational principle of social organization. Simultaneously, however, this process neutralizes these moments, amalgamates itself with them, or shunts them off onto sidetracks where they will not disturb the workings of the overall mechanism.[49] In this form the functionless is transformed into "function in the second degree";[50] it lends to a society which has long since become inhuman the deceptive appearance of humanity and vitality, thereby contributing to the society's continued existence. That the individual is altogether liquidated is, according to Adorno, "still too optimistically conceived. . . . The disaster takes place not as the radical extermination of that which was: rather, what has been condemned by history is dragged along dead, neutralized, and powerless, and ignominiously pulled down. In the midst of the standardized and administered human units, the individual wastes away."[51]

Besides this rather traditional ideology-critical theorem, which focuses on the masking and integrative functions of the non-synchronous, Adorno develops a second, more radical line of argumentation which reveals even the non-synchronous to be mere appearance, to be an effect of rationalization itself. According to this argument, the social structuration process does not exhaust itself in the domination of the exchange abstraction over production, which occurs as extension of the living and dead machinery on the one hand, as a repression and marginalization of the non-exploitable moments on the other. The repressed marginalized does not remain outside of the social mediation, but instead enters into a cycle in the course of which the "sisyphean labor of the individual instinctual economy . . . is 'socialized' and directed by the institutions of the culture industry."[52] The growing organic composition of man thus signifies not merely an extension of specialized technical capabilities, but encompasses also their counterpart, "the moments of the 'natural,' which of course themselves were generated by the social dialectic and now fall victim to it."[53] According to Adorno, precisely the

48. Ernst Bloch, *Erbschaft dieser Zeit* (Frankfurt, 1973), p. 61ff.
49. *Dissonanzen*, p. 333.
50. *Ibid.*, p. 221.
51. *Minima Moralia*, p. 151.
52. *Kulturkritik*, vol. II, p. 508.
53. *Minima Moralia*, p. 260.

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unstructured within individuals must be regarded as a "product of the social form," as a "response to advanced industrial mechanization,"[54] and not, as the contemporary ideologies of immediacy would have it, as the return of repressed spontaneity. "What a certain obdurate innocence enthusiastically views as forest primeval is fabricated commodity through and through, even where, as a 'limited offer,' spontaneity is put out as a special product."[55]

This mediation, which simultaneously disguises itself as immediacy, is made possible by a mechanism which Adorno characterizes as 'substitution.'[56] This term refers first of all to the circumstances that in advanced capitalist society the affects and wishes are increasingly transferred from the use value of commodities to their exchange value, from the concretely useful aspect of a product to its prestige and status value. What gets consumed, particularly in the realm of the culture industry, are pure fetishes whose specific qualities are not even consciously registered by the consumers.[57] This shift, however, is accompanied by a shift in the affect structure itself. "The substitutes fulfill their purpose so well because the desires against which they are measured have themselves already been substituted."[58] Desire is no longer desire for an object, or, in psychoanalytic terms, no longer object-libido. It is desire exclusively for the confirmation and maintenance of the endangered self, which can find no footholds within social reality as a basis for achieving realization and thus is constantly thrown back upon itself. "The affective cathexis of exchange value is no mystical transubstantiation. It corresponds to the behavior of the prisoner who loves his cell because he has been left with nothing else to love."[59]

This substitution expresses itself in the psychic organization of the individual as replacement of object-libido by ego-libido, as regression to priary narcissism. The ego, which is no longer able to achieve an equilibrium between libidinal needs and the demands of self-preservation, regresses under the pressure of the outside world to ego-libido, or fuses its conscious functions with its unconscious ones. This "transposition of the ego into the unconscious" transforms the ego, which was formerly characterized precisely by its conscious achievements, by the raising and conversion of psychic processes from the level of primary process (distinguished by condensation and displacement) to the level of secondary process (distinguished by the capacity for thought and judgement). Also transformed, moreover, is the id, which in the psychic structure of the bourgeois individual had represented an 'exterritorial' agency, similar to the use value in classical political economy.[60] The differentiated forms of object-libido, which Adorno characterizes as

54. *Ibid.*, p. 205; and *Kulturkritik*, vol. 1, p. 85.
55. *Kulturkritik*, vol. 1, p. 126.
56. *Dissonanzen*, p. 25.
57. *Ibid.*, p. 24. See also *Dialektik der Aufklärung*, p. 181f.
58. *Dissonanzen*, p. 39.
59. *Ibid.*, p. 26.
60. See Sigmund Freud, *Gesammelte Werke*, vol. XIV (Frankfurt, 1972), p. 125; and Stefan Breuer, "Subjektivität und Maschinisierung," in *Leviathan*, n. 1 (1978), p. 104.

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primary libido, are repressed by the more archaic narcissistic energies "of a (so to speak) impure libido, one directed towards the ego and at the same time unsublimated and undifferentiated," a libido in which "the self-maintenance function of the ego is (at least apparently) retained, but which is simultaneously split off from consciousness and surrendered to irrationality."[61] Psychoanalytically, this can be identified as a regression, but one which cannot be simply attributed to the individual. Instead, it is a regression which has social roots, an 'artificial regression,' a regeneration of the archaic "within civilization, brought about by civilization itself."[62]

Admittedly, Adorno did not analyze this development in detail. But he did work out the social consequences which result from the replacement of object-libido by primary narcissism. His thesis is that this artifical regression to ego-libido fails to solve any problems, indeed quite the contrary: it only compels ever more substitutions. That the individual under existing social conditions is forced to turn his unused instinctual energies back onto himself only increases his difficulties. With the increase of narcissistic energies rise the pretensions to omnipotence and grandiosity (which develop within the unconscious out of archaic mother representations), but along with these grows the potential for narcissistic insults, which the weakened ego is incapable of mastering. To overcome the threatening split between the archaic ego-ideal (which undergoes a diffusive, cosmic expansion, striving for omnipotence) and the desolation and hopelessness of the real ego, the individual escapes into substitute formations which compensate for his real powerlessness imaginatively through self-projection. This is the root of collective narcissism: "Collective narcissism amounts to this: individuals compensate for the consciousness of their social impotence (which reaches down into their individual instinctual constellations) and at the same time for their feelings of guilt (because they fail to be and to do that which they should be and should do, were they to fulfil their own concept) by making themselves, either in reality or merely in their imaginations, into members of a higher, more comprehensive being. To this being they attribute all the qualities which they themselves lack, and from this being they receive in return something like a vicarious participation in these qualities."[63]

The most striking manifestations of collective narcissism can of course be found in the great charismatic mass movements which are based on the mechanism of identification and the replacement of individual narcissism by

61. *Soziologische Schriften*, p. 71f.

62. *Kritik*, p. 63 and p. 42. With these reflections on the role of narcissism, which are already found in the theory of "pathic projections" in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, and explicitly brought forth for the first time in the essay "Freudian Theory and the Pattern of Fascist Propaganda" (now in *Soziologische Schriften*, pp. 408-433). Adorno anticiapted the debate over the "narcistic personality" and the "new sozialization type" which was touched off in the early 1970s largely by the works of Kohut. See Heinz Kohut, *Narzissmus. Eine Theorie der psychoanalytischen Behandlung narzisstischer Persönlichkeitsstörungen* (Frankfurt, 1973); Thomas Ziehe, *Pubertät und Narzissmus* (Frankfurt-Köln, 1975); Christopher Lasch, *The Culture of Narcissism* (New York, 1979); *Die Neuen Narzissismustheorien: Zurück ins Paradies?* Ed. by Psychoanalytisches Seminar Zürich (Frankfurt, 1981); etc.

63. *Soziologische Schriften*, p. 114. See also *Kulturkritik*, vol. II, pp. 563, 580, and 589.

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Führer-images: nationalism and its derivative, fascism.[64] In so far as individuals make the collective subject of the nation (or the Führer) into their ideal and endow it (or him) with fantastic qualities, they make real a piece of that archaic grandiose-self whose realization is denied to them in their individual existence.[65] At the same time, they liberate themselves via projection from their own aggressivity, previously bound in the ego-ideal, with the unavoidable consequence that the world becomes populated with dangerous objects bent on reprisal, against whom in turn the subject must offer resistance: the flip side of the gratifications which the 'socialized narcissism' creates, is the persecution complex.[66]

According to Adorno, however, it would be a fatal error to equate the phenomenon of collective narcissism with the well-known political mass movements or to couple it with their substantive goals. Collective narcissism does not first manifest itself in certain empirical mass formations: rather, it lies deeper, in the inclination of individuals towards forms of consciousness which are simultaneously subjective and general: belief [*Meinung*], half-education, delusion, myth. Even the simple assertion of a subjective consciousness (which is restricted in its truth content) as unquestionably valid rests on narcissism, "that is, on the fact that individuals up to the present have been forced to turn a measure of their capacity to love not towards others but towards themselves, compelled to love in a furtive, unadmitted and thus poisonous way."[67] While this assertion may, in a particular case, be harmless, nevertheless it slides easily into forms of the 'pathic belief,' in which the tie between the subject and his corrective — the relation of thought to its object — is completely severed.[68] In the pathic belief, experience and reflection are replaced by thinking in clichés and stereotypes, in prejudices and blind resentment. Collective narcissism celebrates its triumph in the countless forms of prejudice and superstition, of the rumors and systems of collective delusion which dominate the everyday life of the masses in advanced capitalist society: it proliferates in occultism as well as in the various sect movements, in star cults as well as in the attitude of 'being on top of things,' that expert manipulation of all the current buzzwords, that posturing as an authority, all of which belong to the contemporary forms of half-education. Adorno goes so far as to trace its presence even in sophisticated forms of reflection which, like transcendental philosophy with its hypostatization of creative subjectivity, only mirror "the imprisonment of the subject in itself, an imprisonment of which the subject himself remains unaware."[69] Since the narcissistic character (or, in the terminology still used in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, the paranoid) "only perceives the external world to the degree that it corresponds to his blind purposes, he is only able to constantly reaffirm his self,

64. *Kulturkritik*, vol. II, p. 563ff, p. 588, p. 675, pp. 691ff. See also *Dissonanzen*, pp. 359ff.
65. *Kritik*, p. 48.
66. *Kulturkritik*, vol. II, pp. 566 and 590. See also *Dialektik der Aufklärung*, p. 217ff.
67. *Kulturkritik*, vol. II, p. 576.
68. *Ibid.*, p. 574ff.
69. *Ibid.*, p. 749.

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which has been alienated to the point where it turns into an abstract obsession. . . . His will pervades the universe, nothing is allowed to dispense with a connection to it. His systems are seamless. As astrologist he endows the stars with the power to destroy anyone who is incautious: in the preclinical stage, he means the ego of a third person, in the clinical stage, his own ego. As philosopher, he turns world history into the executrix of inescapable downfalls and catastrophes. As completely insane or absolutely rational he annihilates those bearing the mark through the individual act of terror or the well-considered strategy of genocide. . . . He is malevolent, driven by compulsion, and as weak as his own strength. As it is said of God Almighty that he draws the creature unto himself, the satanic, fantasized omnipotence draws everything into its own impotence. This is the secret of its domination. The compulsively projecting self can project nothing but his own misery, the reason for which, although resting within him, is cut off from him in his utter absence of reflection. Thus are the products of his false projection, the stereotyped schemata of thinking and of reality, so disastrous."[70]

The interaction of the mechanisms of abstraction and substitution (which, for analytic purposes, we have discussed separately) can be illustrated by the theory of the culture industry, to which Adorno dedicated so much time. The culture industry is the typical product of a mode of production which forces the overwhelming majority of its producers into deadening, uniform-repetitive activities, and which eliminates numerous qualities that prove to be non-exploitable: fantasies and emotions, instinctual needs and dreams, wishes for non-regimented communication and physical activity. All of these banished impulses manifest themselves as mass needs, as a collective demand which is seized upon by capitalism and answered with one specific offer: the production of culture-commodities which (next to capital goods, weaponry, and means of transportation) has become one of the most important branches of industrial capitalism. In this fashion, the socially-developed realm of necessity produces its complement, the realm of free time, in which the need for distraction and release, itself brought forth by the highly rationalized and disciplined mode of production, is satisfied.

However, according to Adorno, the culture industry is not merely an effect of the abstract social structuration process. Once developed, it functions instead as component of this process and enormously magnifies the abstraction mechanism. Being an industry, it is able to fulfill the mass need for meaningful activity, spontaneity, and immediacy only with industrial means, i.e., with commodities whose production and distribution are themselves rationalized and standardized (even if, as with music, there remain traces of an artisan mode of production). The total spectrum of that which the culture industry — spanning from illustrated magazines and comic strips, through radio, TV, and movies, all the way to opera and theater, and, presently, in the form of media conglomerates, undergoing consolidation into a seamless total

70. *Dialektik der Aufklärung*, pp. 215ff.

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system[71] — has to offer consists of stereotypes which are geared to the average reader, listener, or viewer, and which are designed to absorb or simulate a wide range of impulses. These stereotypes aim for a standardized reception in which it is no longer the case that each particular recipient performs the mediation between detail and the conceptual whole; rather, this mediation is schematically reproduced as an industrial prefabrication.[72] The abstraction of labor, which in the scientifically restructured production process leads to a dissolution of the relation between producer and product, is duplicated in the sphere of consumption inasmuch as here, too, the now-autonomous apparatus inserts itself between subject and object: in 'top 40' music, for example, the composition does the hearing for the listener, since his reactions are already planned out in advance, while in film the "social agency of the camera-eye" plugs in between product and movie-goer and anticipates the sensations with which he shall watch.[73]

Adorno worked out the anthropological consequences of this abstraction process particularly clearly in his studies in the sociology of music and television. In music, particularly light music, the standardization of 'hit' production leads to the subjection of listeners to prefabricated listening models, under which everything taken in is automatically subsumed: even deviations and improvisations are immediately resolved into the "comfortable familiarity of his well-worn reaction patterns" by the schema-fixated listener. Through the technique of plugging (i.e., the constant repetition of certain songs in the various media), individuals are conditioned and grow accustomed to the repetition of the ever-identical; at the same time, such schematism promotes passivity and stultification, since productive efforts by the listener are no longer required. Television also forces this regression of consciousness, inasmuch as its pure form, prior to all content, disaccustoms viewers from the use of language. Through fixation upon an image-language (in which the images, if only because of their unremittingly rapid succession, can no longer be studied or examined, but only passively registered), the consumers are forced back to archaic modes of reception and communication, which permit neither differentiation nor a conceptual working through. Moreover, this "televisionization of free time" (M. Winn) serves to destroy the internal atmosphere of the family and further undermines the role of parents as socialization agents, thus making the maturation process more difficult for children, and reinforcing an already rampant infantilism among adults. The result of this development is a general loss of sensitivity and the capacity for reflection, a regression to a collective illiteracy, "a second, this time an acquired illiteracy, towards which the objective spirit of the age as a whole is striving."[74]

71. *Kulturkritik*, vol. II, p. 508. See also Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge, *Öffentlichkeit und Erfahrung*, (Frankfurt, 1972) pp. 232ff.

72. *Dissonanzen*, pp. 205ff.

73. *Ibid.*, p. 208. Cf. also Theodor W. Adorno (with the assistance of G. Simpson, "On Popular Music," in *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*, vol. 9, pp. 17-48.

74. *Dissonanzen*, p. 326. On light music, see *ibid.*, pp. 34ff and p. 208f. On television, see

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Stereotyping, leveling, reduction, and repression: all these phenomena suggest that the abstraction mechanism characteristic for the workings of the culture industry be analyzed in analogy to the function of money, which, as the transcendental horizon of the commodity world, makes possible the exchangeability of diverse concrete products through reduction to their immanent measure — value. The mass media, one could argue, selects from the diversity of needs only those which allow themselves to be subordinated to the formal-organizational standards of 'entertainment,' while all deviating, system-transcending needs — particularly those for productive spontaneity — are omitted or forcibly dammed up.[75] According to Adorno, however, such an analogy only incompletely captures the actual workings of the culture industry. In his view, the culture industry functions so well not only because it standardizes and formalizes needs, but because it simultaneously couples every abstraction with a substitution and thus itself produces, to an ever greater degree, the consumers of its own products. Its functional mode is not truly comparable to that of money, which always 'socializes' products in the sphere of circulation only post facto, only after conclusion of the production process, thus in the final analysis remaining external to them. Rather, it is analogous to capital, which seizes all given forms of production and consumption and transforms them according to its own needs: the fetish character, says Adorno, "has historically become the prius of that to which it should have been the posterius, according to its own concept."[76]

Adorno characterizes the substitutions typical for the culture industry with the Greek prefix 'pseudo,' i.e., false, not genuine: pseudo-individuality, pseudo-activity, pseudo-rationality. The reason for their massive dissemination is that the culture industry, in order to dispose of its products, cannot present them in their undisguised stereotypy, since the needs they attempt to connect with are characterized by their opposition to the stereotypy and abstraction paradigmatic for the sphere of production. The culture industry escapes from this dilemma inasmuch as it does not simply suppress the deviant, the particular, the individual: instead, it draws them into its own designs. In jazz, for example, where individual spontaneity is given space for improvisation which at the same time, however, never leaves the fundamental rhythm, thus stabilizing the musical conformity; in film, where the star cult masks the rigid role distribution and the schematism of serial productions with ostensibly 'original' personalities; in the 'do it yourself' industry, where the 'adventure of pseudo-activity' turns consumers into discoverers of exactly

*Kulturkritik*, p. 510ff. Anders developed a similar argument at about the same time. See Günther Anders, *Die Antiquiertheit des Menschen* (München, 1956), pp. 97ff. See also Marie Winn, *Die Droge im Wohnzimmer* (Reinbek, 1979), and Ulrich Oevermann, "Zur Sache. DieBedeutung von Adornos methodologischem Selbstverständnis für die Begründung einer materialen soziologischen Strukturanalyse," in Friedeburg and Habermas, *op. cit.*, pp. 234-289.

75. Prokop has developed this aspect of Adorno's theory thus, not accidentally, bringing Critical Theory close to the structural-functional theory of generalized communication media. See Dieter Prokop, *Massenkultur und Spontaneität. Zur Veränderten Warenform der Massenkommunikation im Spätkapitalismus*, (Frankfurt, 1974).

76. *Kulturkritik*, vol. II, p. 745.

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those industrial products which were interested in being discovered by them. These are pseudo-forms, or, as Baudrillard calls them: simulacra, towards which needs are increasingly directing themselves, thus producing that "circle of manipulation and retroactive need," into which "the unity of the system is ever more clearly crystallizing."[77]

Nevertheless, Adorno places great emphasis on the fact that the unity of the system is not to be conceived of monolithically. True, the culture industry leads towards a complete revolutionizing of the structure of needs, so that distinctions can no longer be made between 'true' and 'false' ones. However, the satisfaction which the culture industry grants these needs is (for obvious reasons) only temporary and superficial: the next installment in the series, the next generation of products is already waiting 'on call' for its customers. From this situation an ambivalence develops within consumers which is capable at any moment of converting into rage and a desire for destruction. Since this response, however, is no longer filtered and guided by a rational ego, it remains blind and impotent in the face of the appeals of the culture industry which already beckons anew with different products. When individuals do break out of their passivity and rebel against the ceaseless manipulation, they fall prey to a particularly vicious form of manipulation, one which has already anticipated their revolt and draws from it the power for a new, expanded reproduction. As in the Hegelian logic of essence the 'counterthrust' of the immediate only serves to propel the real mediation of the essence with itself, so, in Adorno's view, the individual with his need for immediacy and spontaneity only serves to drive forward the dialectic of abstraction and substitution on which advanced capitalist society is based. "Chaos is the function of the cosmos, *le désorde avant l'ordre*. Chaos and system belong together, in society as well as in philosophy."[78]

Nothing is therefore more illusory than the various strategies of 'culture revolution' which supersede one another with wave-like regularity, criticizing the culture industry on behalf of this or that repressed moment, whose liberation promises to bring 'emancipation,' 'progress' or the like. Even the liberation of the body, of sexuality, of physical movement, on which the jazz-enthusiasts of the 30's prided themselves, was no escape from the commodity structure, but merely its recapitulation: precisely the archaic aspects of jazz, as Adorno noted in 1936, are the most commodity-like: "the rigid, quasi-timeless immobility in the movement, the mask-like steretype, the union of wild agitation (as the appearance of dynamism) and the inexorability of the

77. *Dialektik der Aufklärung*, p. 142. On the pseudo-forms, see Adorno, "On Popular Musik," *op. cit.*, p. 24ff; *Dialektik der Aufklärung*, p. 177; *Minima Moralia*, p. 156; *Negative Dialektik*, p. 341; *Soziologische Schriften*, p. 148; *Kulturkritik*, vol. I, p. 79 and p. 129; vol. II, p. 652, p. 760, pp. 771ff, pp. 796ff; *Dissonanzen*, p. 30, p. 41, etc.

78. Theodor W. Adorno, *Philosophie der neuen Musik*, in *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 12, *op. cit.*, p. 50. Here, Adorno distinguishes himself from Marcuse's rather monolithic concept of the one-dimensional society. His theory of pseudo-forms as a kind of system-generated negativity comes very close to the concept of "artificial negativity." See Paul Piccone, "The Crisis of One-Dimensionality," in *Telos*, n. 35 (Spring 1978), pp. 43-54.

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authority which dominates such agitation."[79] And it has been the same story with all the liberation movements which have followed. The liberation of genitality did not result in the liberation of sexuality but in its neutralization and desexualization, in the replacement of pleasure by immature and surrogate pleasure.[80] Liberation from the family destroyed not only the most effective agent of bourgeois socialization, but simultaneously a precondition for individuality and therefore resistance.[81] Liberation from bourgeois convention not only swept away the inhibitions and repressions which went with it, but simultaneously lifted the inhibition against brutality and violence, which now could be let loose unchecked, whether in concentration camps or on city streets. Even the seeming revolutions of the youth movements in the 20's and 60's ended in a pseudo-activity which at times bore delusionary features and finally ran aground in subcultures no less conformist in their own way than the conformity of mass culture. "Under the spell, even that which is different and of the merest ad-mixture of which should be incompatible with the maintenance of the spell, is transformed into poison."[82] The true misery of capitalist society, so must one summarize Adorno's reflections, consists not so much in the fact that there is so little resistance, as in the fact that what there is takes the form of pseudo-activity and thus makes the blinding mechanisms even more impenetrable. Marx was right when he compared progress with that hideous Indian idol who would drink nectar only from the skulls of sacrificial victims.[83]

The preceeding considerations may have made clear why the negative position Critical Theory originally took regarding anthropology should not be accepted as final. While Lukács in 1923 still saw the great danger of every anthropological viewpoint in the tendency to rigidify man into an object and thereby allow both dialectic and history to be brushed aside,[84] Adorno makes clear that the develpmental dynamic of bourgeois society gives this viewpoint renewed relevance. If the dialectic merely leads to the self-annihilation of this society and history ends in *posthistoire*, anthropology becomes justified once again. True, not in the sense of that simple "turn to nature" or "turn to the lifeworld" by which (according to Marquard) modern philosophical anthropology is constituted,[85] for such a turn suppresses the historical-social mediateness of precisely those phenomena on which anthropology focuses. Justified, however, in the sense of a "turn to second nature" which describes human beings and their relations as petrifications, as sedimentations of the now completely autonomous structure in which they are trapped. Anthropology is only possible today if it becomes dialectical. But in becoming dialectical, it is simultaneously rendered a paradox: an anthropology without anthropos.

79. Theodor W. Adorno, "Über Jazz," in *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*, vol. 5 (1936), p. 243.
80. *Kulturkritik*, vol. II, p. 535.
81. *Minima Moralia*, p. 23.
82. *Negative Dialiktik*, p. 340.
83. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Werke*, vol. 9 (Berlin, DDR, 2972), P. 226.
84. Lukács, *op. cit.*, p. 373.
85. Odo Marguard, *Schwierigkeiten mit der Geschichtsphilosophie*, (Frankfurt, 1973), p. 125.

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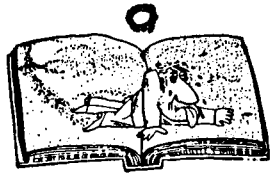

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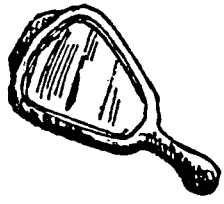

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# THE REALITY OF "MACHINES," NOTES ON THE RHIZOME-THINKING OF DELEUZE AND GUATTARI:

by Christa Bürger*

Diary entry for December 6, 1982:
Induction: the experimental situation.
The instructions for using a book with which I am supposed to experiment "depend upon its links to this or that 'Outside,' " or so it says in the introduction to a (certain) new philosophy. While I try to imagine this proposition, my gaze wanders, nomadically, along the shelves of books lining the walls, and finds its "Outside" in one of the thin pale lilac Larousse volumes: Victor Hugo's *Les feuilles d'automne.* I open it and am at once fascinated; I read: "What has occurred in the year 1831, — in politics: in France, commotions caused by the July revolution have not yet calmed down; sacking of the church of St. Germain-l'Auxerrois, bloody workers' rebellion in Lyon. Resignation of the minister Lafitte, his successor Casimir Périer. In Algeria: continuing operations against the Arabs and Kabyles . . . In Italy: election of Pope Gregory XVI . . . In literature: Lamartine has just published his *Harmonies* . . . *Une Femme de trente ans* and *Peau de chagrin* of Balzac . . . *Faust II of Goethe. In the Salon* Delacroix triumphs with the murder of the Bishop of Liége and the Barricade, Barrye consolidates his fame with his Tiger devouring a crocodile . . . in music Meyerbeer brings out his *Robert the Devil* . . . in science: Faraday discovers magnetic induction . . ."
*clearly and distinctly* I know suddenly what a rhizome is. My little larousse volume fulfils "the ideal of a book, to display everything on a level of such externality, on a single page: lived events, historical determinations, concepts thought, individuals, groups and social formations [. . .] non-signifying and non-subjective."[1]

*Translated by Simon Srebrny.

1. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Rhizome* (Paris: Minuit, 1976), p. 25. Numbers between parentheses refer to pages of this edition.



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In the introduction to the second volume of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari develop, under the title *Rhizome,* the principles of a new method of thinking. One could, with the certain approval of the authors, turn around the theorem of Carl Schmitt and claim that, since the "highpoints of great [philosophy] are at the same time those moments in which the enemy is sighted in concrete distinctness as an enemy,"[2] rhizome-thinking also starts out from the definition of the enemy. It is discerned in Western Rationalism, which rhizome-thinking rejects in all its historical manifestations.

An argumentational strategy characteristic of rhizome-thinking is thus made visible: that it again and again reproduces the categories that it negates. For, however much this thought disavows history and continuity — as well as the break *(brise)*, for there too "a new type of unity triumphs within the subject" (16) — it nonetheless describes, quite against its will, the history of classical thought as a process of degeneration: at the inception of classical thought stands the declaration of sovereignty of the subject *(cogito ergo sum)* and at its (provisional) end, the admission, "I know nothing, I am nothing" (49), which marks the crisis of subjectivity at the turn of the twentieth century. The metaphor of the *tree* is meant to indicate the essence of the enemy: classical thought operates dualistically and hierarchically.

If, with Hegel, one must call dogmatic any critique that merely negates that which it criticizes, then this certainly applies to Deleuze/Guattari's critique of rationalism. The "rules" of rhizome-thinking are derived, point for point, from those of Descartes, who stands at the very outset of that spurned rationalism. Descartes posits the subject of thinking, his own ego, which is supposed to attain out of itself both the grounds of its own analytic work as well as its goal: knowledge of truth. Thus, the self-certain subject determines, for itself, the rules of its thinking: 1) to recognize as true only that which presents itself so clearly and distinctly that there can be no occasion to doubt it; 2) to analyse the object into as many parts as are necessary to understand it; 3)to order the process of thinking in such a way that it begins with the simplest objects and advances gradually toward knowledge of the most composite; and 4) to prepare such complete enumerations and such general reviews that the object realm is grasped in its entirety.[3]

Rhizome-thinking at once liquidates the subject of thinking; in its place arises a randomly formed series of states, whose products enter into spontaneous combinations: "To these centered systems the authors oppose non-centered systems [. . .] in which individuals are all interchangeable, are defined only by a momentary *state,* in such a way that [. . .] the final global result takes shape independently of any central instance" (60). Against order stands (systematic) incoherence, against deductive procedure that of heterogeneity

2. Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, trans. and ed. George Schwab (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutger's University Press, 1976).

3. René Descartes, "Discourse concerning Method," in *The Essential Writings*, trans. and ed. John J. Blom (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), pp. 125f.

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and connection: "Any point of a rhizome can and must be connected with any other" (18), "against the oversignifying *coupures* [of Cartesian analysis] [stands] the principle of the nonsignifying rupture" (27), against the rule of completeness that of multiplicity: "only when the multiple is treated as a substantive, as multiplicity, does it no longer have any relation to the One as subject or as object, as nature or as spirit, as image and world" (21).

Deleuze/Guattari's critique of rationalism will remind some of the *Dialectic of Enlightenment,* which first described the process of rationalisation as one of violence and alienation. "The awakening of the subject is paid for by the acknowledgement of power as the principle of all relations [. . .]. Men pay for the increase of their power with alienation from that over which they exercise their power [. . .]." Modern science does not aim at "concepts and images, not at the happiness of insight, but at method, the exploitation of others' labor, capital."[4] The *Dialectic of Enlightenment* has, ultimately, to do with the unmasking of domination. For that reason it also warns against the surrender of the concept, "for it does not merely, as science, distance men from nature,"[5] but, rather, as the self-reflection of thought, keeps alive the memory of the price that the process of civilisation has extracted. Thought also becomes illusionary when it seeks to deny differentiation. "All mystic unification remains deception, the impotently inward trace of the absolved revolution."[6]

The perspective on reconciliation is lacking in rhizome-thinking. "The rhizome has to do with a relation to sexuality, but also to the animal and the vegetal, to natural and to artificial objects, a relation that is totally different from that of arborescence: it has to do with all kinds of *becomings*" (62f.). Carl Schmitt writes that "The justification of war does not reside in its being fought for ideals or norms of justice, but in its being fought against a real enemy."[7] It seems that rhizome-thinking also has more to do with the identification and occlusion of the "enemy" than with specific ideas of a new way of thinking. The enemy is: dualism, or dualisms, unity, subject and object, culture, meaning, root, and tree. The bad faith of rhizome-thinking is manifested less in the fact that it can only name its positive contribution metaphorically: map and machine, than in the fact that the new philosophical discourse itself proceeds dichotomously. Deleuze/Guattari admit this themselves when they ask: "But do we not reinstate a simple dualism when we oppose the map to the copy like the good to the bad?" (39).

Indeed, it would not be hard to lead rhizome-thinking *ad absurdum* by drawing up an account of its blatant dichotomies. It is, however, more important to consider the social function of a mode of thought that defines itself in opposition to science and culture but that at the same time clings to a virtually fetishistic concept of *book.* To be sure, the "anticultural" (69) book is displaced

4. Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, trans. John Cumming (London: Allen Lane, 1973), p. 9 and p. 4. Translation modified.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 40.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 39.
7. Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political, op. cit.*, p. 49.

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to a site beyond the "tripartite division between a field of reality, the world, a field of representation, the book, and a field of subjectivity, the author" (65).[8] What is intended is the elimination of the interpreting subject. In the reified discourse of rhizome-thinking what appears as real, as a possible and usable book, is that which in Derrida's construal of history marks origin: the *trace,* which lies before the division of thing and sign. "As soon as one attributes the book to a subject, one neglects the operativity of the material" (9). Deleuze and Guattari, these "forgers of the unconscious" (26), hammer into us the claim that a book does not mean anything and that it should not be interpreted. "There is nothing to understand in a book but a lot that one can use. Nothing to interpret and to signify, but a lot with which one can experiment" (72). The ban on interpretation does not sublate interpretation; on the contrary, it only changes its character. In Deleuze/Guattari it becomes a question of belief: "We do not interpret. We merely say that . . ."; "We believe only in Kafka's experimentation — without interpretation or significance."[9] At this point the anarchist gesture turns into authoritarianism. One could say, again with Carl Schmitt, that "the effective significance [of the new philosophers] lies in the thoroughness with which they decide," Their goal is "a pure, absolute decision that does not reason, does not discuss, does not justify itself, created thus out of nothing."[10] The responsibility, however, for the consequences of the decision is rejected as being under the ban on interpretation.

Rhizome-thinking sees itself as praxis: it seems therefore legitimate to clarify the social significance of this thinking on the basis of its implications. Deleuze/Guattari are explicitly not concerned to claim the "status of a science" (65), to found a scientific school, but rather to give instructions for action, for "doing." The instructions read: "perceive things from out of their midst and not downwards from above [. . .], from left to right, or the other way round: try it and you will see that everything will change" (66). Using Kafka as an example, the authors demonstrate how this new and all-transforming mode of perception functions. (One comment in advance: one can see also in the last quoted passage the ambivalence characteristic of Deleuze/Guattari's thinking. A new *way of seeing* is offered — a guiding image that has kept cropping up since romanticism and that culminates in aestheticism: a new regard for reality no longer subject to critique. But this old demand is presented here with a gesture of subversiveness. This ambivalence gains a quite different value as soon as one considers the name this subversion bears; whether it moves "from left to right, or the other way round" is perhaps not so unimportant after all.)

8. The *nouvelle philosophie* is not so new with regard to its view of art. The concept of art in Michel Foucault's *The Order of Things* is continuous with the categories of idealist aesthetics. For a critique, see Peter Bürger, *Zur Kritik der idealistischen Ästhetik* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1983).

9. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guastari, *Kafka. Pour une Littérature mineure* (Paris: Minuit, 1975), p. 9 and pp. 14f.

10. Carl Schmitt, *Politische Theologie*, 3rd ed. (1922; Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1979 p. 83.

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Kafka exemplifies for the authors "minor literature." In contrast to high literature, minor literature is classed as revolutionary, which, in rhizome-thinking, amounts to "unconscious anticipation of coming collective processes of enunciation."[11] In this interpretation (which emphatically denies being one), minor literature is defined by three principles: 1. its language is decoupled from expressivity, at the same time however its chosen poverty signifies deterritorialisation (concretely: the Jews of Prague speak German, that is, the language of the dominant minority from which they are excluded.) We shall have to return to the concept of deterritorialisation. 2. In minor literature everything is political, and that means, without subjectivity. It has no author-subject. 3. And that means also: there is no work-intention. The individual work is part of a collective process of enunciation and defined precisely by this *valeur collective.* The "revolutionary conditions" of minor literature, which functions "in the belly of the literature one calls great (or established)," demand that "it find its own form of under-development, its own patois, its third world for itself."[12]

Concepts such as 'political,' 'collective,' and 'deterritorialisation' ('under-development,' 'third world') seem to refer to a concrete socio-historical functional interconnection. Within rhizome-"grammatology," however, they acquire a different valency: they become the empty screen for any projections whatsoever. This way of thinking postulates for literature a primacy of enunciation that is even more radically formulated than in the programs of aestheticism, and that liberates the text from any determinate relation between enunciation and content. "The creative line of flight brings with itself the whole of politics, of the economy, the whole bureaucracy and judiciary: like a vampire, it sucks them up to make them produce sounds, still unknown, of the near future — fascism, stalinism, americanism, *the diabolic powers that are beating on the door.* For expression precedes content and entails it (of course it does not mean anything)."[13] The line of flight (the revolutionary way out) consists in the following: that author and recipient, both renouncing their status as subjects, attach themselves to "the machine," surrender themselves to the desires/powers *(dêsirs/pouvoirs).* The experiment of writing, like that of reading, is as follows: "To go into, go out of the machine, to be inside the machine, to go around it, to approach it, is all part of the machines: they are, independently of all interpretation, states of desire. The line of flight is part of the machine [. . .]. The problem is: not at all to be free, but to find a way out [. . .]."[14]

Kafka finds such a way out in absurdly enlarging the father image that at

11. It would be valuable to analyse the meaning shifts that the dichotomy of high and low (or legitimate and illegitimate) culture — empirically investigated in France especially by Pierre Bourdieu — undergo in Deleuze/Guattari. This dichotomy points also to the context of domination in which literature functions in bourgeois society. See Pierre Bourdieu, *Die feinen Unterschiede* (Frankfurt, 1983) and *Zur Dichotomisierung von hoher und niederer Literatur*, ed. Christa Bürger, Peter Bürger and Jochen Schulte-Sasse (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1982).
12. *Kafka, op. cit.*, p. 33.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 74.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 14f.

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once threatens and fascinates him, in submitting to it eagerly in covering over all the names of history with the name of the father.[15] In this way desire and power become interchangeable: "There is no desire for power, power is itself desire."[16] In a further step, even the desire to oppress and the desire to be oppressed become interchangeable: "Oppression, as much for the oppressor as for the oppressed, flows out of a certain disposition of power-desire, out of some state of the machines."[17]

Can a meaning be ascribed to this flood of words? Adorno, has linked critique of the concept to critique of immediacy. He warns against considering culture as "some epiphenomenon superimposed on being that must be eliminated"; critique must rather strike "what lies underneath [. . .], false society,"[18] Throughout the *Dialectic of Enlightenment* the thought recurs that "those somber writers of the bourgeois dawn [. . .] who advocated the egotism of the self, acknowledged in so doing that society was the destructive principle."[19] This holds especially for Nietzsche, whose "merciless doctrines proclaim the identity of domination and reason," and for all the others whose critical negativity preserved an "unshakeable confidence" in a humanity "which, itself no longer distorted, has no further need to distort."[20] For the *Dialectic of Enlightenment* the difficulties in the concept of reason — in which oppression and liberation enter into an indissoluble nexus — are explained by the fact that the bearers of reason "stand in real opposition to one another."[21] Adorno does not seek the solution to such contradictions in the invocation of a nature set free *(désir)*; when Nature is held up as a model and goal, then for Adorno it counts rather as a "lie and bestiality." "Only when nature is known *(erkannt)* does it become the urge of being toward its peace, toward that consciousness that from the beginning has mounted unswerving resistance to leader and collective. Nature is not dangerous to dominating praxis and its ineluctable alternatives, with which it rather coincides. What is dangerous is that nature be remembered."[22] But rhizome-thinking emphatically opposes remembrance and elevates forgetting to its program. (69).

15. *Ibid.*, p. 18f.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 102.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 102.
18. Theodor W. Adorno, "The Essay as Form," trans. Bob Hullot-Kentor and Frederic Will *New German Critique*, No. 32 (1984), p. 16.
19. *Dialectic of Enlightenment, op. cit.*, 90. Translation modified.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 119.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 83. Translation modified.
22. The regressive moment of a cultural criticism that invokes the unfettering of nature, which Adorno addresses, is clearly exemplified in an early work of Deleuze on Michel Tournier's novel *Vendredi ou les limbes du Pacifique*, which he interprets as an inversion of Defoe's Robinson Crusoe: "In that Tournier formulates the problem in terms of goal/end and not of origin, he forgoes the possibility of letting Robinson leave the island. The end, the goal of Robinson is dehumanization, the coming together of libido and the free elements, the discovery of a cosmic energy or of a great elemental health" [in *Logique du sens*, (Paris: Minuit, 1969) p. 404; compare his "Une Théorie d'autrui" in *Critique* (1967) Nr. 5]. In Tournier's novel, which he evaluates positively, Deleuze discovers already a concretization of the principle of the productivity of the unconscious. It seems to me to be a consistent development that in his last novel *Le Roi des aulnes* Tournier makes explicit his fascination with the pseudomyths of German fascism.

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If nature strengthens opposition to domination only when known and remembered, then the rhizome-thinkers shirk commitment to such a labor of reason. "We have nothing to do with the signifier [. . .]. We are pure functionalists: what interests us is how a thing runs, functions, what machine [. . .]. The only question is, how they function — the intensities, flows, part-objects, all things that do not signify."[23] Although Deleuze/Guattari deny responsibility for the meaning of their own discourse, it seems to me to be legitimate at least to inquire after the consequences implied by their thinking. What remains hidden in the abstract formulation "functioning not meaning" becomes manifest as soon as one addresses a concrete text. The following discussion takes the talk of deterritorialisation literally and asks how it "functions" in the story *La Comédie de Charleroi* (1934) by the well-known French fascist Pierre Drieu La Rochelle, whose works have been republished during the sixties.

The first-person narrator of this story, a young intellectual, who, as secretary to a "patriotic" lady operating on the fringes of Parisian political circles, accompanies her on a visit to the battlefields of WW I where his friend (who was her son) fell, while he escaped with but a slight wound. The sight of the wide landscape provokes in the narrator the memory of his wartime experiences. These experiences demonstrate the "rules" of rhizome-thinking in their concrete determinacy. This representative of the young intelligentisia rejects the world of empty representation, that also signifies perfect mediocrity, the extinction of the individual. The way out, the line of flight, that leads out of this world is war. In war the individual is not a subject but a desiring machine, beyond the "old idiotic hierarchy"[24]; on the battlefield, on which he expatiates and which fulfils him completely, the narrator discovers his self. It is a dark, inexplicable and irresistible urge to experience himself: "I held victory and liberty in my hands [. . .] The victory of men. Over what? Over nothing; beyond everything. Over human nature? It is not a question of conquering [. . .] nature, [. . .] but of pushing it to its limits because we have the power within us. It is not a question of overcoming fear by courage, but of melting fear into courage and courage into fear, and of impelling oneself forward to the uttermost limits. For what else is there, apart from this impulse? Was not this impulse sufficient unto itself?"[25]

This movement without content, which signifies nothing, denotes nothing and does not want to have a concept of itself, but it does need names: "And one has to shout a name before a thing can exist."[26] It is in war that everything has a name and means nothing, that each man knows himself in the other and is recognized by him.[27] Here there are "only mechanical linkages of desire, as

23. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, "Über Kapitalismus und Schizophrenie. Gespräch mit F.G. und G.D.," in *Rhizom* (Berlin: Merve, 1977), pp. 60f.

24. Pierre Drieu La Rochelle, "The commedy of Charleroi," in *The Comedy of Charleroi and other stories*, trans. Douglas Gallagher (Cambridge: Rivers Press, 1973), p. 44.

25. *Ibid.*, p. 45.

26. *Ibid.*, p. 46.

27. *Ibid.*, p. 47. Drieu distinguishes this "good war without hierarchy (!) from modern warfare of science and the generals.

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collective processes of enunciation" (65). The epiphany of the name on the battlefield makes a lie of the subversive gesture of rhizome-thinking. For the *Dialectic of Enlightenment* the "magical plane [on which] dream and image were not mere signs for the thing in question, but were bound up with it by similarity or through the name is also, necessarily, a superceded plane."[28] The process of history cannot be overcome by an act of violent assertion. The abstractions of rhizome-thinking conceal the barbarism of a "new form of delusion which deposes every conquered mythic form."[29] Drieu's text is without ambivalence, openly fascistic. He knows that the "awakening of the subject is paid for by the acknowledgement of power as the principle of all relations," and so he affirms power enthusiastically as well as the senseless dissolution of the individual in a collective ecstasy, which produces a feeling of power: the dominion of the horde. "The horde which so assuredly appears in the organization of the Hitler Youth is not a return to barbarism but the triumph of repressive equality, the disclosure through peers of the parity of right to injustice."[30] War is for Drieu a field of possibility for all: "Nobility is open to everyone."[31] In truth, however, it means the terror of all over all under the aegis of an elitist community of exceptional persons. "What was it that suddenly sprang up? A leader. Not just a man. A leader. Not only a man who gives, but a man who takes. A leader is a man in his prime, a man who gives and takes in the same ejaculation. I was a leader. I wanted to appropriate all those men around me, to magnify myself through them, and to magnify them through me, and to hurl us all together, with myself at the head, across the universe."[32]

Carl Schmitt's *Politische Theologie* begins with the lapidary statement: "sovereign is he who decides on a state of emergency [. . .] For the decision about the emergency is, in an eminent sense, decision."[33] "A philosophy of concrete life" must, for Schmitt, concern itself with the state of emergency, for it "thinks the general with energetic passion." "In the emergency the force of real life breaks through the crust of a mechanism become rigid through repetition." "The emergency is that which cannot be subsumed; it eludes general comprehension." In an emergency, decision is freed from moral norms and becomes absolute.[34] The correspondence of this thought with the values of Drieu La Rochelle is evident. The application of the philosophy of concrete life to concrete life reveals, however, against the intention of the author, the complicity of this thinking in domination. In the state of emergency of war each individual who makes a decision — it is always the same one: battle! — and who, in the terms of Deleuse/Guattari, plugs into the machine, appears to himself as, for one moment, that which simply cannot be subsumed, as

28. *Dialectic of Enlightenment, op. cit.*, p. 11. Translation modified.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 36.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 13.
31. Drieu, *op. cit.*, p. 47.
32. *Ibid.*, pp. 44f.
33. *Politische Theologie, op. cit.*, p. 11.
34. *Ibid.*, p. 22 and p. 19.

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bearer of a name in the midst of a large generality. He is, however, at the same time "once again made to be that against which the evolutionary law of society, the principle of self, had turned: mere species beings, exactly like one another through isolation in the forcibly united collectivity."[35]

The political ambivalence of rhizome-thinking can also be seen in a second example. For his analysis of fascism, published under the title *Männerphantasien*, Klaus Theweleit invokes Deleuze/Guattari, to whom, despite their polemic against history, he imputes — quite correctly — a model of history. Deleuze/Guattari indeed construe the process of modernization as an — albeit impeded — process of deterritorialization: the capacities set free by the advancing domination of nature are not transformed into human energy, but rather are diverted and channelled in the interest of Capital. Thus, the process of deterritorialization is at the same time one of reterritorialization and limitation. "The work of reterritorialization conceives man as 'controller' of the machine, as the one who steers and channels both his own and the societal flows — a reactionary program, since the object of these actions is his own unconscious: production shut down there, while the streams of money flow."[36] These formulations are indebted to Norbert Elias who has worked out how the control of affect is an essential failure of the process of modernization, and for whom rationalization is "only one side of a transformation affecting the whole personality, the level of drives and affects no less than the level of consciousness and reflection."[37] Out of the changing relations into which people enter with each other there emerges an "order more compelling and stronger than the will and reason of the individual people composing it. It is this order of interweaving human impulses and strivings [. . .], which determines the course of historical change."[38]

Unlike Elias, Deluze/Guattari and their disciple Theweleit describe the process of civilization with a value judgment that it is a process of degeneration unfolding according to a "reactionary program." It is here that the concept of the machine finds its systematic locus. It is meant to designate the mode of functioning of the Unconscious, which wants nothing other than to produce. "Its content is the desire to desire, what it produces is reality. This desire to desire, this productive force attends to *all* part-objects and objects of reality."[39] The elimination of the subject becomes comprehensible here: machine is a non- or pre-personal energy, a complex of mobile particles, which ceaselessly enter into and dissolve linkages with other particles in order to produce new units of production.

For his analysis of fascism Theweleit takes up an observation of Alfred Sohn-Rethel, who distinguishes between the classes and strata that contributed to the electoral success of the National Socialists and the agents of the

35. *Dialectic of Enlightenment, op. cit.*, p. 36.
36. Klaus Theweleit, *Männerphantasien*, 2 vols. (Frankfurt, 1977), Vol. I, 335.
37. Norbert Elias, *Power & Civility*, Vol. II of *The Civilizing Process*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (New York: Pantheon, 1982), p. 326.
38. *Ibid.*, p. 230.
39. *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 264.

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fascist exercise of power. Theweleit derives from this a working strategy: to investigate "the desires, the vital power of the people acting in the historical processes,"[40] that is, "to start out as close as possible to the phenomena of fascism and its predecessors,"[41] and to see literature "as part of the fascist means of "coping with life," as part also of fascist action."[42] "It seems that up till now the fascists have been asked too little about fascism."[43] Theweleit is not concerned with the "meaning" of fascist language, but asks rather "how it functions [. . .] and where its bodily site is."[44] He rejects as inadequate ideology-critical analyses because he sees operative in them "fear of the productive power of their own unconscious."[45] Theweleit, who does not wish to deliver "unfruitful proof of the superiority of other positions or productions"[46] apparently does not share this fear; on the contrary, he abandons himself so unconditionally to the verbal desiring-productions of the fascists whom he lets speak, that he himself quietly disappears. Indeed, he takes this literature as "real." So he comes, necessarily, to posit a *travail du text*. From this perspective, however, a critique of fascism ceases to be possible.

According to this interpretation, the desiring-productions of fascist literature elude the traditional categories of subjective and objective; they have a "collective character"; they are "anti-individual" and collective categories — which have a positive connotation in rhizome-thinking. "This language is as little interested in the object as in the subject. It even seems as if it had *fictive* authors, *one single* fictive author. What we see at work here seems rather to be a process: the fascist process of appropriating and transforming reality, of which these authors have written the protocols."[47] The rhizome, we have learned, is a process. "Without subject and object; it forms linear multiplicities [. . .], which can be spread out on a single plane of consistency" (61). To the term 'fascism' Deleuze/Guattari remark in a footnote: "Method: one will not seek a common genus of which the fascisms, or even the totalitarianisms, would be the species. Nor will one seek a species peculiar to fascisms or even to German fascism and which would be different from all the others. [. . .] One considers the concept rather as a multiplicity defined by its dimensions (there coexist in the same epoch all kinds of German fascisms, with right and left 'currents,' mass lines and lines of flight, urban and rural forms)." (26, n. 4)

Neither Theweliet nor the rhizome-thinkers can explain this multiplicity, either under a general concept or in its particularity, but only as a dark flowing. Critique thus becomes abstract rejection when the fascist texts are merely dubbed 'anti-production' but not analyzed substantially. No subject is available who would be able to judge from a conceptually established standpoint.

40. *Ibid.*, vol. II, p. 533.
41. *Ibid.*, vol. II, p. 539.
42. *Ibid.*, vol. II, p. 541.
43. *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 120.
44. *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 40.
45. *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 324.
46. *Ibid.*, vol. II, p. 541.
47. *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 118.

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But even abstract negation cannot be held fast, since the analyzing subject has linked himself "to the machine." "This anti-production has a destructive and a productive side. Out of devivified reality it builds its new orders."[48] The justified critique of omission on the Left, which Ernst Bloch has formulated in *Erbschaft dieser Zeit*, namely to have ceded to the Right the sphere of the irrational, is transformed in Theweleit into a helpless fascination with fascist aesthetic: "That a person imprisoned in himself, in his body armour and social constraints would, under certain circumstances, rather 'break out' than have enough to eat, and that his politics could consist in the organization of this break-out rather than of an economic order that would hold out the promise to the next generation of a full belly for life, all this is what fascism teaches us. It contains the utopia of paradisiac irresponsibility. I think one could discover here a 'beauty in the deepest disfigurement.' "[49] Such a confession makes shockingly clear the extent to which Ernst Bloch is still right: "Youth often rejects its own present [. . .] but its dreams do not come only from an empty belly. They are also viscerally encouraged by a callow youthfulness that is not present. The right can easily pay and seduce unemployed adolescents."[50] Indeed it really takes a lot of callow youthfulness to discover something utopian in this, as Theweleit does — today after the concrete experiences of German fascism.

Deleuze/Guattari, who are quite aware of the affinity of their books to fascism, reject in an interview all responsibility for their social effect.[51] Nonetheless, they avowedly seek "allies," (like their predecessor Nietzsche) with whom to pursue the "absolute decoding," that is, the destruction of "Culture,"[52]

The gesture of subversion alongside "frenetic acquiescence in reality" permits one to see rhizome-thinking as a remake of the "conservative revolution" of the twenties.[53] For now, the rhizome-thinkers are still playing with the interchangeability of the concepts fascism and revolution: "We [announce] the development of a generalized fascism [. . .]. Either a revolutionary machine will form, capable of taking desire and desiring phenomena into its service, or desire will continue to be manipulated by the suffocating, oppressive forces and will thus threaten revolutionary machines even from within. We distinguish two modes of investment of the social field: the preconscious investments of interest and the conscious investments of desire. The investments of interest can be truly revolutionary and yet permit unconscious investments of desire to endure that are not revolutionary or are even fascist."[54]

48. *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 270.
49. *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 552.
50. Ernst Bloch, *Erbschaft dieser Zeit* (1935), Vol. 4 of *Werkausgabe edition suhrkamp* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1977), p. 105.
51. "With regard to being responsible or not responsible, we do not know these terms; they are police terms or terms from forensic psychiatry." (In "Gespräch" in *Rhizom, op. cit.*, p. 64).
52. *Ibid.*, pp. 61f.
53. See Manfred Frank, "The World as Will and Representation: Deleuze's and Guattari's Critique of Capitalism as Schizo-Analysis and Schizo-Discourse," *Telos*, No. 57 (Fall 1983), pp. 166-176.
54. *Rhizom, op. cit.*, p. 56.

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In his famous "Speech to University Students on Intellectual Life" for the Goethe Centennial in 1932, Jakob Wasserman explained the "catastrophe of the spirit" out of the hopelessness of a whole young generation which had abandoned itself to fatalism: "[It] is at the same time both its last wish and revenge. I can understand it."[53] We can certainly no longer understand it today. The productive anarchy invoked by Hofmannsthal has been refuted by history. It is no coincidence that rhizome-thinking arises in an epoch in which the work of remembrance is beginning to take effect as a productive historical force — in exemplary manner in writers such as Chita Wolf, Peter Weiss and Uwe Johnson. The "anticultural book" of Deluze/Guattari, however, stands under the banner of forgetting (69), for the denial of historial experience in rhizome-thinking has a systematic character.

55. Jakob Wassermann, "Rede an die studentische Jugend über das Leben im Geiste," in *Neue Rundschau*, 43 (1932), p. 531.

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# A CRITIQUE OF HABERMAS' *DISKURSETHIK*

by Alessandro Ferrara

With the publication of *Theorie des kommunikativen Handelns* (1981)[1] and of his essays "A Reply to my Critics" (1982),[2] "Diskursethik — Notizen zu einem Bugründungsprogramm" (1983), "Moralbewusstsein und kommunikatives Handeln" (1983),[3] and "Über Moralität und Sittlichkeit — Was macht eine Lebensform 'rational'?" (1984),[4] Habermas has considerably developed and systematized his views on ethics. Up to *Communication and the Evolution of Society* (1979),[5] ethics had been of interest to Habermas mainly insofar as certain concepts related to it — such as the ideal speech situation, communicative action, presuppositions of argumentation, etc. — were crucial for the purpose of grounding a universalistic point of view in philosophy and in social theory. Passing mentions of a "universalistic ethic of speech" and of "communicative ethics" can be traced back to the 1972 essay "Wahrheitstheorien"[6] and to the volume *Legitimation Crisis* (1975).[7] But a systematic formulation of the *Diskursethik* has been undertaken by Habermas only over the past few years. Thus, it has now become possible to attempt an overall assessment of Habermas' ethical position.

*The Project of a Cognitivist* Diskursethik

Following his own argument in "Diskursethik," we can best sum up Habermas' conception of ethics as the confutation of seven skeptical objections against universalistic ethics. First Habermas spells out which phenomena are going to constitute the domain of ethics. Then, in the second round of his discussion, he tries to show that practical questions bear a relation to truth, albeit not the same kind of truth associated with descriptive statements. In the third, he deals with the skeptic's contention that the irreducible pluralism of ultimate values (Weber's "warring gods") often prevents the achievement of rational consensus in moral matters. More specifically, Habermas

1. J. Habermas, *Theorie des kommunikativen Handelns,* 2 voll., Suhrkamp, Frankfurt, 1981.
2. In J.B. Thompson and D. Held (eds.), *Habermas. Critical Debates,* MacMillan, London, 1982, pp. 219-83.
3. Both these essays are in J. Habermas, *Moralbewusstsein und kimmunikatives Handeln,* Suhrkamp, Frankfurt, 1983.
4. In H. Schnädelbach (ed.), *Rationalität,* Suhrkamp, Frankfurt, 1984, pp. 218-35.
5. The essays translated in this book had appeared earlier, in 1976.
6. Now reprinted in J. Habermas, *Vorstudien und Ergänzungen zur Theorie des kommunikativen Handelns,* Suhrkamp, Frankfurt, 1984, pp. 127-83.
7. J. Habermas, *Legitimation Crisis,* Beacon Press, Boston, 1975. Originally published as J. Habermas, *Legitimationsprobleme im Spätakpitalismus,* Suhrkamp, Frankfurt, 1973.



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responds to this objection by introducing a "bridge-principle" of universalization which should enable us to generate rational consensus whenever the validity of a norm is thrown into question. In his fourth confrontation with moral skepticism, Habermas takes up the objection that the proposed principle of universalization merely absolutizes Western intuitions about morality. As a response, Habermas offers a transcendental-pragmatic grounding of such a principle. In the fifth, Habermas deals with renewed objections against the proposed transcendental foundation by modifying Apel's grounding of the principle of universalization in the direction of a *Diskursethik*. In the sixth round of discussion, Habermas confronts the skeptic's last-ditch attempt to challenge universalistic morality thoroughly, namely the skeptic's dropping out of argumentation altogether. Habermas tries to show that the option of stepping in or out of moral argument and of communicative action is not a real choice for any social actor, let alone entire communities. Finally, in the seventh discussion, Habermas comes to terms with the charge of ethical formalism.

As for the first two points, noncognitivist approaches to ethics such as Stevenson's *emotivism* or Hare's *prescriptivism*, as well as meta-ethical positions such as Moore's *intuitionism*, miss the phenomena which form the specific core of ethical reflection. Either they assimilate normative expressions to the expressions that describe reality (particularly, the inner reality of feelings and preferences) or they assimilate normative expressions to *imperatives* uttered by speakers in the name of principles and values which are both ultimate and arbitrary, or they treat normative validity as a predicate to be attributed to sentences according to given rules. All the non-cognitivist ethical theorists translate ethical experience into the vocabulary of some other order of experience, be it volitions, preferences, disguised utility, power and so forth, and in so doing they fail to account for the moral experience *par excellence*. That is, the distinct perception that something (a norm or a principle of action) is *right* and for that reason alone *ought* to be the case, regardless of all considerations of expediency, utility, feelings or preferences and regardless of what the community believes. But then what is it for a norm to be valid? What is it for an action to be justified? Whoever asks such questions must presuppose that the possible answers are neither randomly valid nor completely arbitrary. He or she must presuppose, on the contrary, that right norms can be distinguished from unjust ones. The task of philosophical ethics is, according to Habermas, to reconstruct and spell out the principles which guide us in deciding what counts as normatively valid and what does not.

Whereas emotivist and prescriptivist approaches to ethics fail to do justice to the basic intuition that there is a sense in which norms *are* right, some overly-cognitivist approaches fail to do justice to the fact that the "being right" cannot be reduced to, although it resembles, the "being true" of factual statements. The asymmetries which set the *normative validity* of norms apart from the *truth* of assertions are discussed by Habermas in the second part of his essay. Whereas in the sphere of cognition assertions *qua* speech acts are the

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only entity about which truth or falsity can be predicted, in the sphere of morality normative rightness can be attributed primarily, but not exclusively, to norms. In fact, it can be attributed also to the speech acts through which those norms are expressed. Habermas mentions then a second asymmetry, linked with the ambiguity of normative validity. In the realm of morality we must introduce a distinction between the social fact that a given norm is recognized as valid and its being normatively valid, i.e., its *deserving* recognition. These two aspects of validity may go together in specific cases, but they may also come apart. Nothing analogous to this two fold character of validity can be found in the realm of cognition. There we can find a relation between the existence of states of affairs and the truth of the statements which describe them, but not between the existence of states of affairs and the *expectation* that the corresponding statements *could* be shown as true. Rather, this is the case with norms. The factual recognition of a norm by a community says nothing as to the rightness of the norm. It only suggests that the norm *could* be shown as valid. From these asymmetries, according to Habermas, it should be concluded that the inner logic of moral argument is more crucial to answering the question "When is a norm valid?" than the logic of scientific discourse is to answering the question "When is a statement true?"

In terms of logic of argumentation — and here we move on to Habermas' third round of discussion — true statements are produced neither through pure deduction nor through mere fact-gathering. The different procedures of induction acknowledged within the various disciplines can be seen as argumentative devices capable of bridging the gap between single observations and general hypotheses in an intersubjectively binding but still non-tautological way. In the practical realm, when the rightness of a norm is questioned, a similar function is played by the *principle of universalization* (U). This principle ensures the possibility of generating rational consensus as to the validity of a norm even in the face of a conflict of opinion or interest. This principle has been understood by all the proponents of a cognitivistic ethic from Kant to Rawls as the idea that valid or right are those norms which embed a truly general will or respond to a truly general interest. In the provisional version chosen by Habermas as his point of departure, every valid norm must satisfy the condition that :(U) "the effects and side-effects which presumably follow from its *general* observance in the interest of *any* individual can be accepted (and preferred to the consequences of the known alternatives) by *all* those concerned."[8] With the introduction of (U) Habermas closes his discussion of the skeptic's point that even though one could conceive of the rational adjudication of the validity of norms, nevertheless the plurality of ultimate value orientations present in society might well put a conclusive and rational consensus beyond the reach of otherwise good-willed actors.

The fourth round of Habermas' dialogue opens with the skeptic's objection that (U), far from being a universally acceptable principle, merely projects on a philosophical plane the moral intuitions of Western culture. Habermas'

8. Habermas, *Moralbewusstsein . . . ,op. cit.,* pp. 75-76.

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strategy here is to avoid a *semantic* derivation of (U) from the truth of some higher-order axiom — a move which would expose him to Albert's "Münchhausentrilemma"[9] — and to have recourse to a *pragmatic* grounding of of (U). To the question: Why should we accept (U)? Habermas' answer runs: Because we know no other sensible way of conducting a moral argument about the validity of a norm. This transcendental-pragmatic grounding of (U) draws on Apel's work,[10] but at the same time Habermas modifies Apel's argument in one important respect. Both Apel's and Habermas' transcendental derivation of (U) hinge on the notion of a performative contradiction. Whereas a semantic contradiction amounts to the fact that both one element and its negation appear in the propositional content of a speech act, the contrast in a performative contradiction typically occurs between what is expressed at the semantic level and what is presupposed at the pragmatic level.[11] Apel makes use of this notion in his claim that the skeptic, by challenging the universal validity of (U) through an argument, *implicitly* accepts some presuppositions of argumentation which entail, among other things, (U) and whose validity he then wishes to deny *explicitly*. As Habermas points out, in this form Apel's reasoning remains open to one important criticism. Namely, a skeptic might counter that the "unavoidable presuppositions of argumentation" are binding only to the extent that one remains bound to the context of moral *argument*. It is not clear how these presuppositions can lay claim to universal validity when the regulation of *social action* through norms becomes the issue.

In the fifth discussion with the skeptic, Habermas tries to meet this new objection by giving up the attempt to derive (U) directly from the content of the presuppositions of discourse, as Apel does. Following Alexy,[12] he further specifies these presuppositions as a) *semantic* presuppositions (linked with consistency), b) *pragmatic* presuppositions (which have to do with sincerity) and c) *procedural* presuppositions (which prescribe an unlimited access to discourse, the equality of chances to raise and challenge points, and the equal chance to express attitudes, desires and needs.) Furthermore, Habermas introduces a second premiss in his grounding of (U), to the effect that we consider valid only those norms which regulate social action in the common interest of all those concerned.[13] Then Habermas' argument can be summed up in the following way: If 1) Whoever engages in argumentation must take for

9. The trilemma consists in having to choose inevitably one of three equally unacceptable options: either to enter an infinite regress, or to break the chain of deduction at some arbitrary first principle, or to argue in a circular way.

10. See K.O. Apel, "Das Apriori der Kommunikationsgemeinschaft und die Grundlagen der Ethik," in K.O. Apel, *Transformation der Philosophie,* Suhrkamp, Frankfurt, 1973, pp. 358-435.

11. Some examples of utterances which involve a performative contradiction are: "It rains but I don't believe it rains," "Tell me what day it is but I know it," "I promise you $100 but I don't intend to give you any money."

12. See R. Alexy, "Eine Theorie des praktischen Diskurses," in W. Oelmüller (ed.), *Normenbegründung, Normendurchsetzung,* (Paderborn, 1978).

13. By introducing this second premiss, Habermas falls into a *petitio principii.* The central feature of (U), i.e., that the validity of norms is tied to their embodying a general interest, is surreptitiously introduced — as a minor premiss — within the demonstration. See Wellmer, "Moral und Recht. Zur Rekonstruktion der Diskursethik," paper presented at the Conference on "Moralität und Sittlichkeit," J.W. Goethe-Universität Frankfurt, 18-22 March 1985, p. 52.

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granted such procedural presuppositions as "No one concerned should be excluded from discourse," "All participants should have an equal chance to raise and criticize claims and to express their needs,"[14] and If 2) Valid are only those norms which regulate social matters in the common interest of all those concerned. Then whoever honestly tries to evaluate within discourse any claim to normative validity commits him or herself to procedural conditions which amount to the acceptance of the principle: (U) — A contested norm is right (valid) if, and only if, the effects and side-effects, which foreseeably follow from its *general* observance in the interest of *any* individual, can be accepted by all *without coercion* (*zwanglos*).[15]

Habermas' argument is set up in such a way that the first premise implies (U) (in the way material implication) and the second premise serves the purpose of having (U) apply also to the evaluations of the norms that regulate non-discoursive action. The status of (U) is for Habermas that of a general rule of moral argumentation, which enables moral actors to generate rational consensus whenever a divergence of interest or opinion arises. As such, it must not be confused with other principles and norms of conduct which may also be quite general and abstract but remain rather the *object* of moral discourse. Nor must it be confused with the procedural presuppositions of argumentation, whose significance extends beyond the scope of moral discourse (to theoretical and aesthetic discourse) and which rather *ground* the validity of (U). The *content* of (U) is what each philosophical ethic tries to spell out in a different way. Habermas' own suggestion is that it can best be specified in the direction of a *Diskursethik*, which would adopt as a core-principle: (D) "Validity can be claimed only by those norms which meet (or could meet) — within the context of a practical discourse — the consensus of all those concerned."[16] Two additional considerations close this fifth round of Habermas' discussion. First, that status of (D) is not be be construed as the intimation of an *a-priori* valid moral principle. The "*Begründung*" provided above is by no means a "*Letzbegründung*." Rather, it is a *quasi-transcendental* one. The content of the first premiss must remain open to the possibility of empirical falsification.[17] In

14. Habermas offers the following example in support of his claim. Consider (1) "After we excluded A, B, C, . . . , from the discussion, we were finally able to convince ourselves that N (a norm) is valid." Assume that A, B, C belong to the set of those affected by N and do not differ in any relevant way from the other participants, i.e., they are not unable to take part in discourse on account of age, insanity, apparent strategic motivations, and so forth. The reason why (1) appears distinctly odd is because anyone who utters such a sentence becomes entangled is a performative contradiction. The oddity of (1) cannot be accounted for in semantic terms alone. It is not that the word "convince" is used in a semantically inappropriate way. It suffices to rephrase (1) from first person to a third person perspective to become aware of this. In fact, in the third person we obtain (2) "After they excluded A, B, C, . . . , from the discussion, they were able to convince themselves that N (a norm) is valid." where the word "convince" is still used in a way that does not coincide with what we usually mean by convincing, but the performative contradiction, and with it the impression of oddity, are eliminated.

15. Habermas, *Moralbewusstsein, op. cit.,* p. 103.

16. *Ibid.*

17. In Habermas' words, "the statement that no alternative exists for a given presupposition [of discourse] and that this prsupposition rather belongs to the plane of the unavoidable, i.e., general and necessary, presuppositions [of discourse] has the status of a guess. It must be cor-

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this respect, the moral philosopher who renounces the claim to ultimate foundations is in the same position as the linguist who tries to make a case for a given grammatical rule by examining examples and counterexamples. The second consideration points to the fact that, in contrast to Rawls and other cognitivist theorists, the *Diskursethik* allows the philosopher no privileged access to the operation of his or her own conceptual machinery. All substantive pronouncements on the validity of single norms must originate in *real discourses* or, alternatively, in discourses undertaken in an advocatory way.[18] The outcome of these real discourses cannot be anticipated by philosophers. When they do so, as e.g., Rawls does in *A Theory of Justice*, their substantive prescriptions must be understood as *contributions* to a public discussion on the matter and, as such, open to dispute.

In the sixth turn of Habermas' imaginary dialogue, the skeptic adopts an entirely different strategy. The skeptic now refuses to argue at all in order to take the wind out of Habermas' sails. Should this silent but eloquent objection remain unchallenged, a decisionistic remnant would creep into Habermas' quasi-transcendental grounding of (U). His grounding would be compelling only for those who have already decided to step into rational argumentation, but meaningless to those who decide otherwise. Moreover, the necessity of deciding in favor of rational argument could not itself be rationally grounded. Habermas' strategy here is to renounce a counterattack and settle for a long and patient blockade, as it were. You may refuse to argue now — he says to the skeptic — but sooner or later you will. The idea of a long term withdrawal from discourse is only a Robinsonade, because the presuppositions of argumentation are also embedded in the stuctures of communicative action and thus are part of the everyday contexts of interaction in the life-world. Dropping out of the communicative aspects of the life-world is possible in the long run only at the price of severe mental disturbances and loss of identity. Even though a single individual could, in principle, choose to commit suicide or to drive him or herself insane in order to prove a philosophical point, such a refusal to enter argumentation could not be adopted by any community. For the symbolic structures of this community's life-world can only be reproduced in the medium of communicative action.[19] Also in this case, then, a long term rejection of (U) would prove self-destructive. The refusal to enter rational argument necessarily leads to an existential deadend.

Finally, in the seventh round of discussion, the skeptic raises the charge of ethical formalism against the *Diskursethik*. It must be said that here Habermas fails to do justice to the real force of his opponent's objection. At times it is even

roborated by cases as a nomothetic hypothesis *(Gesetzhypothese)*", Habermas, "Diskursethik — Notizen zu einer Begründungsprogramm", *op. cit.*, p. 107.

18. See Habermas, *op. cit.*, p. 104. On the difficulties linked with the advocatory dimension of the *Diskursethik*, see M Brumlik, "Über die Ansprüche Ungeborener und Unmündiger — Wie advokatorisch ist die diskursive Ethik?", paper presented at the Conference on "Moralität und Sittlichkeit," J.W. Goethe-Universität, Frankfurt, 18-22 March 1985.

19. This point is developed in Habermas, *Theorie des kommunikativen Handelns*, Vol. II, *op. cit.*, pp. 212-28. See also Habermas, "A Reply to my Critics," *op. cit.*, p. 227.

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hard to see how he imagines the objection to be exactly formulated. But since I intend to criticize the *Diskursethik* from what I understand to be a similar standpoint, for the time being I will just summarize Habermas' response to the "umbrella"-accusation of formalism. In his reply, he stresses six points.

i) The *Diskursethik* has no substantive ethical orientations to offer, but only a procedure for choosing among competing orientations, i.e., *discourse.* In this sense it is correct to characterize it as a *formal* ethic.

ii) Discourse, however, always takes place within a given life-world, i.e., against the background of certain already-made value-choices. The *Diskursethik* can generate consensual choices about valid norms within one horizon of values but should not be expected to help us choose *between* one horizon of values and another. In this sense, it offers no solution to the problem of the "warring gods."[20]

iii) *Prima facie,* what is stated at point ii) would seem to restrict the validity of ethical choices made under the guidance of the *Diskursethik* to the one horizon of values only, within which the discussion has taken place. This Habermas sees as undeniable yet trivial. In fact, he argues, this holds only from an objectivating perspective. From the first-person standpoint of the actor who takes up in earnest (frontal) the question of the validity of a norm, this validity is necessarily seen as extending beyond the limits of one's context.[21]

iv) Insofar as the assessment of inner needs comes to be a crucial element in certain moral decisions, ethical discourse comes to interweave with aesthetic and therapeutic modalities of argument. These two modes of argument, however, differ from the "harder" quality of ethical discourse in that they do not share the presupposition that, in principle, a final consensus can *always* be reached.[22] Thus, when it happens that the "harder" ethical discourse must, in some concrete case, incorporate the results of argumentations of the "softer" kind, then the capacity of (U) to generate consensus under all conditions is also weakened. Ethical discourse inevitably suffers a loss of intersubjectivity, but has to live with it because this gap between the different forms of argument (and rationality) has its roots in the developmental history of Western rationalism.

v) Ethical discourse is inherently more vulnerable to the influence of social conflict than theoretical discourse or aesthetic forms of argument.

vi) Practical discourses can be seen as islands (always at risk of being submerged) in the ocean of a Praxis where the model of the consensual reconciliation of conflicts by no means prevails. Understanding is always threatened by

20. See Habermas, "Diskursethik — Notizen zu einer Begründungsprogramm," *op. cit.,* p. 114 and Habermas, *Theorie des kommunikativen Handelns, Vol. I, op. cit.,* p. 41.

21. See Habermas, "Diskursethik — Notizen zu einer Begründungsprogramm," *op. cit.,* p. 114, Habermas, "A Reply to my Critics," *op. cit.,* p. 255, and Habermas, "Über Moralität und Sittlichkeit — Was macht eine Lebensform rational?", *op. cit.,* p. 229.

22. "In principle" means here "if the argument can be carried out in a sufficiently public way and for long enough" (Habermas, "Diskursethik — Notizen zu einer Begründungsprogramm," *op. cit.,* p. 115). On the logic of aesthetic and therapeutic forms of argumentation (the term "discourse" is not applied to them in order to underscore their "softer" structure), see Habermas, *Theorie des kommunikativen Handelns,* Vol. I, *op. cit.,* pp. 42-4 and 70-1.

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power. Thus every action oriented to ethical principles must come to terms with the strategic imperatives that may support its effectiveness. This means that the *Diskursethik* must always incorporate the Weberian ethic-of-responsibility as a component.

The Hegelian-oriented skeptic — contends Habermas — wishes to dramatize these obvious but innocuous limitations of any formal ethic and tries to turn them into something that would undermine the validity of (U). Rather, beneath these difficulties are to be recognized the complex problems generated by Western modernity and by the differentiation of the value-spheres. The modern separation between the life-world and the specialized value-spheres results, as far as the sphere of the practical is concerned, in a fateful differentiation of *questions of justice,* answerable along the universalistic lines of a cognitivistic ethic, and *questions about the good life,* to be answered only from within the horizon of one life-form and with no guarantee (but only the possibility) of intersubjective agreement. One of the positive consequences of this process is the rationality gain which stems from the "decontextualization" of questions of justice. For now the validity of norms can rest on rational consensus, as opposed to authority, and conflict can be converted into consensus. The price to be paid is an increased need for *mediation* between principled ethics *(Moralität)* and the community's mores *(Sittlichkeit).* Not only are the questions that come under ethical scrutiny decontextualized, but also the answers that post-conventional morality gives to these questions are *demotivated.* These answers have lost the motivational immediacy of the concrete presciptions embedded in the mores of the community. Whenever they have to be *applied* to a concrete context of action, a special hermeneutic sagacity *(Klugheit)* will have to be used in order to mediate between abstract principles and concrete constellations of needs, feelings and meanings. However, insists Habermas, it cannot be the task of the philosopher to provide a specification of this mediating faculty. Rather, this prudence must be seen in psychological terms, as part of the cognitive abilities of any post-conventional moral actor.

*The Problems of a Cognitivistic Diskursethik*

Before addressing the weak points of Habermas' *Diskursethik,* let me briefly recall the several strong and valuable aspects of his program. Borrowing McCarthy's idea, I will characterize these positive aspects as emphases on either Kantian or Hegelian themes.[23] Overall, Habermas' position in ethics is that of somebody who, being aware of Hegel's trenchant critique of the Kantian ethic, wishes to strengthen Kant's case: a) by using psychological evidence (Kohlberg and Piaget) to substantiate the plausibility of a trans-historical principle of universalization underlying the conduct of a mature modern personality;[24] b) by clearly detaching norms, to which (U) applies, from values and

23. See T. McCarthy, "Rationality and Relativism: Habermas' 'Overcoming' of Hermeneutics," in J.B. Thompson and D. Held (eds.), *Habermas. Critical Debates,* (MacMillan, London, 1982), pp. 57-78.

24. See Habermas, "Über Moralität und Sittlichkeit — Was macht eine Lebensform rational?", *op. cit.,* pp. 226, 230.

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forms of life, on which philosophical ethics must keep silent; and c) by incorporating the systematic consideration of consequences of action into the factors of moral judgement, in order to avoid the pitfalls of an ethic of ultimate ends.[25] Move a) is designed to counter Hegel's attack on the poverty of Kant's moral psychology and especially on the cleft between reason and feeling which pervades Kant's conception. Move b) responds to Hegel's contention that the categorical imperative — or (U) for that matter — only works, i.e., helps us to discriminate good norms from bad ones, if we already know what we value most. Move c) is designed to counter Hegel's contention that any formal ethic based on an abstract principle is bound to remain a self-righteous but ineffectual ethic of good intentions. The significance and worth of Habermas' program cannot be overestimated, especially if one considers that over the last 150 years philosophical thought oriented towards emancipation has always privileged the Hegelian priority of constructing "the State with good laws" over the Kantian priority of never treating others as means. The problem, however, is that in his critical rescue of the Kantian leitmotif Habermas keeps closer to Kant than is really necessary for his purposes. As I will argue below, from this basic mistake stem many of the problems which haunt his *Diskursethik.*

Let us go back to the merits of Habermas' program. The first two are Kantian emphases. Habermas has an exceptional ability, just as Kant did, to aim his ethical theory precisely at the core of the ethical phenomenon, i.e., what it means to feel that a norm is *right.* His account of rightness, however, mitigates Kant's views in one important respect. In lieu of the apriori cogency of the categorical imperative Habermas offers a principle of universalization whose cogency rests on an empirically falsifiable reconstruction of the presuppositions of argumentation. Habermas again plays a Kantian theme when, in spite of his acknowledgment that ethical action must "come to terms" with the strategic imperatives of the world as it is, he insists on distancing the *Diskursethik* from all political Machiavellianism, including Machiavellianism motivated by the desire for emancipation. Within the framework of the *Diskursethik* no one can legitimately play the role that Hegel assigned to the world-historical individual. Even though it is part of Habermas' program to integrate the systematic consideration of the consequences of action within ethical judgement, against Hegel's insistence that in the ethical evaluation of action priority be given to the objective contribution of conduct to the progress of objective Spirit (over the individual's "abstract" rights), Habermas pushes on the Kantian pedal of intention as the key-determinant of right conduct. However, the solipsistic intention of the Kantian subject is transformed, in Habermas' account, into a process of discoursive will formation. There are prices to be paid to be sure. One of them is the much lamented lack of a "Habermasian politics" and the difficulty of deriving one. This difficulty he shares once more with Kant, because for both strategic action can never be

25. Habermas, *op. cit.,* p. 229.

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justified in its own right, but can at most be tolerated as an unfortunate second best. Yet the yields to be gained make it a price worth paying.

The last two strong points of Habermas' *Diskursethik* strike Hegelian chords. When he retorts against the skeptic that only in an "abstract" sense can we choose between stepping in or keeping out of rational argumentation, because no form of life or identity can survive without recourse to communicative action, Habermas is speaking in a Hegelian tongue. In that context "abstract" means, as it did for Hegel, senseless because arbitrarily detached from the whole. Finally, even though (U) is meant to be as transhistorical a criterion as Kant's categorical imperative and is also grounded on transhistorical considerations (the unavoidable presuppositions of discourse), Habermas in an Hegelian way does not detach the emergence of this principle from the developmental process that has led to the rise of Western modernity. The fixed universalism of the Kantian ethic gives way to a dynamic approach which does not renounce universalism.

Let me now turn to the problems with Habermas' approach to ethics. Benhabib and Wellmer, among others, have recently offered valuable critiques of the foundations of the *Diskursethik*. Benhabib has pointed to a circularity implicit in Habermas' use of the notion of "ideal speech situation." On the one hand, such requirements as an unrestricted access to dialogue, the equality of chances to raise and challenge claims, and so forth, are thought of as features of the ideal speech situation. On the other hand, the normative cogency of such requirements could only be established — as with all other validity-claims — through general consensus in the ideal speech situation.[26] Wellmer criticizes Habermas for his failure to differentiate, in his attempt to ground (U) as an *ethical* principle, between what it means for a *maxim of conduct* to be morally mandatory and what it means for a *norm* to be valid or legitimate. According to Wellmer, although Habermas intends to reconstruct the principle underlying our intuitions about the ethical appropriateness of modes and maxims of conduct, in the end he only gives us a (disputable) account of our intuitions on the legitimacy of norms. Furthermore, Wellmer revives against Habermas the objection from which Habermas tried to rescue Apel, i.e., that the ethical cogency of the presuppositions of discourse does not extend beyond the boundaries of argumentation. The presuppositions of discourse, far from implying anything at the level of conduct, for Wellmer have rather the status of *constitutive rules* for the language game: moral argument. No one can violate them without falling into a performative contradiction, just as no one can move a knight diagonally and still claim to be playing chess. Yet, these presuppositions can no more orient our choice of a line of conduct than chess rules can orient our action outside the context of the game.[27] I will leave aside

26. See S. Benhabib, "The Methodological Illusions of Modern Political Theory: the Case of Rawls and Habermas," in *Neue Hefte Für Philosophie,* 21, pp. 47-74. This critique is developed on pp. 57-59.

27. See A. Wellmer, "Moral und Recht. Zur Rekonstruktion der Diskursethik," paper presented at the Conference on "Moralität und Sittlichkeit," J.W. Goethe-Universität, Frankfurt, 18-22 March 1985.

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these lines of criticism and give the benefit of the doubt to the *Diskursethik*. Assume that Habermas' grounding of (U) in transcendental-pragmatic terms could be strengthened and made invulnerable to these and other criticisms — which I am not sure to be the case. Then still the project of the *Diskursethik* as it is formulated now would be doomed to failure by its own excessive formalism.

As we have seen above, against the skeptic's contention that the pluralism of ultimate values does in most cases prevent ethical questions from being rationally set one way or another, Habermas introduces (U) as a rule of argumentation capable of generating rational consensus. Later, he qualifies the efficacy of this move when he admits that rational consensus about the validity of norms can be achieved only from within an already-made choice of values and that about such choice between competing values the *Diskursethik* has little to say. However, the intersubjective assessment of the validity of a norm when all the participants *are* agreed on the values they wish to further is not really the issue. At least, it is not the objection that any sensible skeptic would raise. Rather, the problem is that the pluralism of value-orientations is a sociological *fact* of modern society. *More often than not* our discussions about the validity of norms take place within contexts where the proponents of different theses also refer to different and competing value choices. Then, unless Habermas subscribes in his heart to the unlikely supposition that underlying society there exists *one* set of ultimate values recognized by all, it is hard to see how his *Diskursethik* can deal with the reality of contemporary moral life. As it stands now, his adoption of a formalistic perspective risks making the *Diskursethik* formally sound but *"lebensweltlich"* irrelevant, because the conditions under which the *Diskursethik* can best generate rational consensus never (or very seldom) occur and, instead, in the most frequent cases of moral conflict it must remain silent. Furthermore, in Habermas' response to the skeptic's seventh objection one gets the irritating impression that he tends to minimize problems which are quite devastating for his account of ethics. For instance, in the space of just a few paragraphs he liquidates the issue of value-choice, the fact that whenever inner needs come into the picture the "softer" forms of aesthetic and therapeutic argument "weaken" the *Diskursethik's* capacity to generate consensus, and also the fact that sometimes ethical principles must be balanced against strategic considerations. Habermas deals with these issues as though they just represented innocuous "limitations" of the *Diskursethik* and were not, instead, the crucial problems to which the *Diskursethik* (or any other procedural ethic, for that matter) has so far failed to give a satisfactory solution. However, I wish to pursue this discussion with reference to a concrete example. Let me introduce a case of moral conflict which I consider to be fairly representative of the kind of conflicts faced by contemporary moral actors. Then I will apply the *Diskursethik* to it and finally will discuss the results.

*A moral dilemma:* A moral actor whom we will call Jones has borrowed some money from Bob, a friend of his whom he has known since high-school. Bob holds a good job

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and over the past few years has saved some money in order to buy a sports car. But the same morning that Bob was about to visit a dealer, Jones came to see him and asked if he could borrow almost precisely that amount of money. Jones' father was seriously ill and needed immediate surgery. Jones reassured his friend that the debt would be paid back in two years.

At the time when this took place Jones had barely enough money for his rent and meals. He planned to finish in a few months the score of a symphony which was already scheduled for recording and on this he placed his hopes for a substantial improvement of his financial situation. The operation did not help Jones' father, who died a few weeks thereafter. After this event, Jones suffered several breakdowns. Unable to concentrate on his musical work, his chance for recording his symphony fell through. The very prospect of completing the symphony became increasingly remote and with it also Jones' chances for any reliable return from his musical work.

After the two years have elapsed Bob wants his money back. This poses a gruesome alternative for Jones: either to take a secure job, negotiate a mortgage, pay his friend back, and then pay the loan back to the bank in 15 years or, if Bob refuses another deferment, simply to postpone repayment until some better time which in fact may never arrive.

Jones is repelled by the second alternative but, on the other hand, knows himself well enough. Fifteen years of work at a fulltime dull job most likely will spell the end of his aspirations of becoming a composer, no matter how hard he tries. Furthermore, the idea of giving up his artistic career frightens him. In the context of therapy, Jones has learned to see his interest in composing music as more than just the pursuit of an ambitious goal. From therapy Jones has gained the insight that his depression and his inability to enjoy life, which once led him to seek help, stem from the precariousness of his inner equilibrium. He oscillates between recurrent fears of self-dissolution and compensatory phantasies of omnipotence. The cultivation of his gift for music has become for Jones, toward the end of his therapy, a good way of practicing a mature and realistic relation to the world and to himself. It has become a solid ground on which he builds his sense of continuity, purpose and cohesion. He fears that no other activity, let alone a clerical job, could replace music in this respect.

On the other hand, Bob wants his money back. He feels that by patiently waiting for months and months he has given Jones a more than fair chance to work out some way to pay. Bob likes to think of himself as a down-to-earth and realistic person, who has been wise enough to give up his youthful phantasies and to get started on a solid career as soon as possible. He is now the manager of the local branch of a large bank and with the money that he makes every year Bob can afford many things, which constitute for him a compensation for the dullness of his workday routine. One of these things was a sports car which he has once test-driven and dreamed of ever since. Bob firmly intends not to let a daydreamer such as Jones spoil his chance to buy that car. Also Bob thinks that to grant Jones a deferment, with no guarantee that it will really be the last, would only encourage Jones to indulge in his childish phantasies.

Thus, when Jones calls one last time, Bob flatly refuses to consider any alternative to a quick payment.

The ethical question is then: Under these conditions, should Jones pay his debt?

I take this example to be representative of the kind of dilemmas faced by contemporary moral actors in two respects. First, the values which direct Bob's life are not the same as the ones which appeal to Jones, even though the two

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characters live in the same society and perhaps even in the same social class. Second, the impact of one line of conduct on the self-identity of an actor is part of what should be decided before we take a stance. But then — could retort Habermas — it is unfair to the test the *Diskursethik* on this moral dilemma. For value-choice and the evaluation of the balance of identities necessarily take place, as stated in "Diskursethik — Notizen zu einem Begründungsprogramm," within a "softer" form of argumentation, where eventual consensus cannot be guaranteed. The adequacy of the *Diskursethik* should be tested on cases where conflict or disagreement touches on the validity of norms, not on the appropriateness of values. This objection, however, loses much of its poignancy if one reflects on the following facts. First, the conflict which opposes Bob and Jones is about whether the circumstances of Jones' life justify a suspension of the general norm that debts should be paid back. Bob and Jones (presumably) agree on the validity of the norm in general, but disagree on whether it should apply in Jones' case. They disagree because they apply the norm in the light of different values or in the light of different conceptions of the good life. This kind of conflict is far more common than the symmetric one, i.e., complete agreement on values but disagreement on the norms which should implement them. To be sure, sociological observations cannot settle philosophical arguments but nonetheless they can shed light on the context within which philosophical constructs must make sense. From recent studies on the cultural trends of advanced industrial societies,[28] it emerges that about 20% of the population of those societies subscribes to what has been called "post-materialist" values, another 20 to 25% remains tied to the old life-style of possessive individualism and acquisitiveness, and the remaining 50 to 60% falls somewhere in between. Under these conditions one can be fairly confident that the conflicts between two or more social actors will almost always involve people who subscribe to different sets of values. Secondly, the evaluation of the impact of conduct on the identity of people is not an isolated "special case" sometimes impinging on the capacity of (U) to generate consensus. Rather, it is the norm for a postconventional moral actor. The evolution of the modern personality also points in the direction of a greater and more refined ability to perceive one's and others' inner needs. Then the "softer" forms of argument, which are linked with the interpretation of needs and identities, are *always* going to be in the picture of moral judgement and not just in certain "limit" cases. If this is true, how worthy is an ethic that can generate consensus only in those cases where no identity or inner need is at stake — such as perhaps general questions of fairness in political, legal and administrative matters — but has little to say in the everyday contexts of moral decision?

In light of these considerations, it makes sense to test the *Diskursethik* in the Bob-and-Jones case. For one thing, from the difficulties of the *Diskursethik* one can learn in which direction to move in order to conceive a philosophical ethic

28. See R. Inglehart, *The Silent Revolution,* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977) and D. Yankelovich, *New Rules,* (New York: Random House, 1981).

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that — as Habermas rightly requires — does not fall behind Kant, is universalistic and cognitivist, but is also *relevant* in the most common cases of moral choice. Then let us consider the question: What would Jones do if he adopted the Diskursethik? The first indication he would draw from Habermas' ethic is to try to convince Bob to acknowledge his good reasons and thus to allow him a deferment. Bob's consent would close the incident. But suppose that, just as it happens with Kohlberg's druggist who refuses to sell a life-saving drug to somebody in order to make more money,[29] Bob turns a deaf ear. Then Jones has to make up his mind "monologically" and things begin to get complicated. The next best thing to obtaining Bob's consent in a *real* discourse, according to the *Diskursethik,* is to instantiate this discourse in one's mind and see if Bob — now imagined as able to see through his interests and neurotic compulsions and as no longer angry at Jones or strategically motivated — would freely consent to a deferment. Here the question raised by Lukes, and never convincingly answered by Habermas, receives its proper place.[30] That is, in such a case, how real must this imagined Bob be? Should we imagine an ideal discussion with a character as he in fact is? Then the result can only be negative. Bob imagined as Bob really is would still say no. On the other hand, Bob imagined as he *could* be if only he were not blinded by interest, neurosis, etc. could say yes. But then to what extent is this new Bob still Bob? We could imagine Bob as a liberated, rational and sensitive person, and be almost certain that he would then agree on a deferment. Yet this imagined character would no longer bear a meaningful resemblance to the real Bob. Where are we to stand between these two extremes, according to Habermas?

Now let us turn to the easy case. Bob decides to talk things over and agrees to meet Jones in order to discuss the matter with complete openness. Assume that both Bob and Jones are motivated by the best intentions and that their conversation comes as close as it is humanly possible to the ideal speech situation. Still the *Diskursethik* would run into difficulties, even on the most favorable terrain. In fact, for Habermas the source of the normative validity of a correct moral judgement is the force of the best *argument,* not the plausibility of the best *ethical intuition.* To be sure, moral arguments express our ethical intuitions. But they do so by degrees of approximation. They are not *identical* with intuitions. There may be gaps between the far-fetching quality of one's intuition of what is right to do a given situation and the contingent limitations of one's ability to express this intuition in the abstract and reflexive language of practical reason. Even in the ideal speech situation, such limitations may exist due to age, education, psychological states or relative distribution of argumentative ability. Sometimes the historical context is such that there

29. A complete presentation of the Heinz dilemma can be found in Kohlberg's essay "Indoctrination versus Relativity in Value Education," in L. Kohlberg, *Essays on Moral Development,* vol. 1, (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1981), pp. 6-28.

30. See S. Lukes, "Of Gods and Demons: Habermas and Practical Reason," in J.B. Thompson and D. Held, (eds.), *Haaermas. Critical Debates,* (London: MacMillan, 1982) pp. 134-148. For Habermas' response, see Habermas, "A Reply to my Critics," in the same volume, pp. 254-6.

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exists a whole stock of developed ideas which make it easy to make the best argument in support of one intuition and, on the other hand, a relative lack of a similar background may make it difficult to make "the best argument" in favor of the correct intuition. Instead, Habermas makes it true *by definition* that the argument accepted as the best in the ideal speech situation always embeds the best intuition about the matter at hand. This strikes me as an overly strong assumption, even by Habermas' standards. Such an assumption introduces a rationalistic bias into Habermas' ethic, in that reflexive constructs (in this case arguments) come to be valued more than the intuitions for which they are the vehicle, and is bound to generate further difficulties. Here are some. Assume that Jones is subjectively certain of the collapse of his identity in the event that he has to give up music. Yet Bob, unconvinced, makes the best argument about Jones' ethical duty to abide by his commitments and Jones, as a conscientious follower of the *Diskursethik,* pays the money. Later he does collapse, attempts suicide a few times, survives, but his life becomes totally meaningless. In this case Bob need not feel guilty. Of course, he may feel sorry for his mistake and thereby win some of our sympathy, but strictly speaking no one can reproach him if he does not. For no one is under the obligation to feel guilty for doing what is right. On the other hand, if Jones unilaterally refuses to pay even though Bob has made the best argument, he is doing something wrong. If we independently consult his therapist and the therapist assures us that, to the best of his knowledge and professional experience, Jones could not withstand the loss of his artistic activity without collapsing, still this is irrelevant for the *Diskursethik.* At most we can invite Bob again for another round of discussion and see if this new piece of evidence impresses him, but we cannot retrospectively say that Jones *ought* to have done what he did, namely refusing to pay when the best argument suggested that he should pay.

More difficulties arise if we consider our example from a third-person perspective, i.e., from the standpoint of a moral philosopher who tries to separate rigorously the moment of normative rightness from the broader frame of questions about the good life and values. Two implications of the *Diskursethik* are of interest here: a) from an *ethical* point of view, Bob's claim for his money is right, normatively valid; then from an *aesthetic* standpoint we are free to say that we do not like his personality or that we like Jones' personality and life-plan better, and b) therefore Jones must pay in all cases unless he obtains Bob's consent to a deferment. What problems arise from these conclusions? In his essays "Moral Development and Ego Identity" and "Moralbewusstsein und kommunikatives Handeln"[31] Habermas draws extensively on Kohlberg's work and often mentions Kohlberg's essays "Justice as Reversibility" and "From Is to Ought"[32] without ever taking distance from the various

31. These essays are included in the volumes *Communication and the Evolution of Society,* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1979), and *Moralbewusstsein and kommunikatives Handeln,* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1983).

32. These essays can be found in L. Kohlberg, *Essays on Moral Development,* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1981), pp. 190-226 and 101-189.

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applications of Kohlberg's moral theory to concrete examples. It is then fair to assume that Habermas does not disagree with Kohlberg on the most important example, i.e., Heinz's dilemma. In this dilemma Heinz's wife needs a particular drug, produced by a druggist who is determined to profit from his discovery and would not sell it for less than his price. The woman would not survive without the drug and Heinz has no way to raise the amount of money demanded by the druggist. The question is: In such a situation should Heinz steal the drug? Kohlbert assumes that every postconventional moral actor should answer positively. My dilemma is constructed in an analogous way, except for one feature: what is at stake is not physical life but identity, not Jones' physical survival but his ability to remain the same person. Although Kohlberg discusses the durggist's claim to his property and the woman's claim to her life as *rights* rather than norms, it is apparent that these rights are much closer to values in their scope and generality. The relevant way to phrase Kohlberg's question is: should human life take precedence over property? It is hard to see this as a choice between two norms implementing the same value. Thus, when Habermas insists that a modern universalistic ethic can answer only questions about the validity of norms, it is also hard to see how this claim can be reconciled with Kohlberg's substantive claim of a life-over-property hierarchy. Furthermore, if Kohlberg's solution to the Heinz dilemma can be vindicated within Habermas' conception of ethics, it is even harder to see how the *Diskursethik* could side with a property-over-identity hierarchy in the Bob-and-Jones example. For if we allow that Heinz has a right to steal the drug how are we to deny Jones' right to "force" a deferment upon Bob? One could say, perhaps, that we can never be so certain about identities as with physical life. In other words, it is easier to know if one would die without a drug than to know whether one would become another person if deprived of a cherished activity. But this is far from true. The statements of medical science are also probabilistic and based on past experience, just as the statement of an analyst is. Only a matter of degree separates the certainty with which a physician can say that under certain conditions someone is going to die from the certainty with which a psychoanalyst can say that under certain conditions someone will break down. The difference is not to be seen in terms of probability. Rather, it consists in the fact that the knowledge of medical science is nomothetic and the knowledge on which psychoanalysts rely is based on understanding. But do we want to say that this nomothetic quality makes the prediction a better one? Do we want to say that *this* makes Heinz more justified in stealing the drug than Jones in not paying his dept? On the other hand, one could say that the difference between surviving and dying is clear enough to anyone in a way that the difference between remaining oneself and becoming another is not. Or, in other words, that survival is an all-or-none thing, whereas identities can be altered by degrees. Again, this objection rests on a misunderstanding. If we modify Kohlberg's example, to the effect that Heinz's wife will not die but is at risk of being paralyzed we could still find a general consensus on Heinz's being justified in stealing the drug. But what if

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his wife risks only a partial paralysis or indeed a very minor one? Where would we draw the line between an impairment of life which is serious enough to override the claims of property and one which is not? If one sees death as just the extreme of a continuum, i.e., as the ultimate and irreversible impairment of life, then the impression that moral questions where physical life is at stake are easier to solve than those concerning identity is quickly dispelled.

Another difficulty has to do with idea of a distinction between *questions of justice*, capable of receiving a universally and intersubjectively valid answer, and *evaluative questions*, usually answered either in terms of subjective preference or in terms of the value-orientations embedded in cultural identities and life-forms. When considered at an abstract level the distinction makes sense, but in the context of a concrete moral choice Habermas' expectation that the two orders of questions can be kept separated seems overly optimistic. For one thing, actions are interpretations of doings from a given perspective. Depending on the description under which it is considered, an action then may or may not fall within the scope of the *Diskursethik*. For example, when Bob utters the sentence by which he claims his money back, he can be seen as performing several acts, such as (at least) a locutionary act, an act of reference, an illocutionary act (a request) and a perlocutionary act. Under one description, from an illocutionary perspective, what Bob does is request that his money be given back to him and, as such, his action would fall within the class of actions about which it is possible to decide intersubjectively whether they are justified. Under another description, however, what Bob does can be seen as an instance of somebody's use of the normative weight of legal right in order to obtain the satisfaction of a desire at the cost of a friend's identity. Yet, under this description, what Bob does would rather fall into the realm of those outlooks on life which can be evaluated only in terms of subjective preference. In other words, the problem of the "warring gods" which Habermas tried to solve by introducing his distinction between questions of justice and questions about the good life has merely been shifted onto another plane. Now we have a criterion, i.e., (U) for rationally deciding whether an action is justified, but we do not have a criterion for rationally choosing between various descriptions of the same doing. In order for the distinction between questions of justice and questions about the good life to play its role, one has to presuppose that moral actors always know, and always agree with one another on, the category under which their actions fall. Again, this seems an overly demanding assumption.

This list of shortcomings of the *Diskursethik* could continue, but at this point it would add little to the specification of the common pattern which underlies all the problems linked with Habermas' ethical views. This common pattern can be best described as an excessive residue of Kantianism. In spite of his attempt to prop up Kant's weak moral psychology with Piaget's and Kohlberg's empirical generalizations, to pre-empt the accusation of self-righteous sterility by requiring the systematic consideration of consequences and to rebuke the Hegelian charge of bogus contentlessness by detaching norms

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from values, nevertheless it is ironic that Habermas' *Diskursethik* should reproduce many of the same weaknesses of the Kantian ethic. For example, Habermas recognizes that the certainty of reaching rational consensus diminishes when the evaluation of self-identities is introduced into the picture of moral judgment, but fails to draw the proper conclusion from this fact. That is, if one also realizes that most ethical dilemmas require us to evaluate the impact of alternative courses of action on identities, and if it belongs to the notion of a mature postconventional actor that he or she always addresses such orders of problems, then one should accord a more central place to empathy, taste and reflective judgment. Instead, Habermas tends to restrict the meaning of ethics to reduce the significance of this element of phronesis or taste to a matter of application (*Anwendung*) and to a matter of the psychology of moral actors. Competent moral actors are generally able to mediate abstract norms and concrete cases but the principles underlying this competence — i.e., the inner logic of the judgment of taste and the potential for universalism therein contained — are not seen as part of ethics and thus are not worked out adequately within the *Diskursethik*. This I take to be a weakness of Habermas' conception of ethics and, moreover, one that stems from quite the same reasons as the weakness of Kant's moral psychology. Both Habermas and Kant tend to overlook the *real* conditions under which ethical judgment takes place and consequently fail to take these conditions into account on a philosophical plane.

The same "unrealistic" flavor of the Kantian approach to ethics can be felt when Habermas dismisses as "trivial" the questions raised by the Weberian version of an ethic of responsibility or when he considers the temporal and motivational limitations inherent in every real discourse as "trivial requisites of the institutionalization of discourse," which "by no means contradict the partially counterfactual content of the presuppositions of discourse."[33] Precisely because these trivial requisites are not adequately taken into account, the *Diskursethik's* counterfactual standard cannot provide much guidance for action. We are left, as in the case of Bob and Jones, with the question: What is a just solution short of consensus? Which criteria should I adopt if consensus cannot be reached? The invocation of the counterfactual criterion does not solve the problem. Can we say that from the counterfactual specification of the ideal speech situation it follows that the longer a discussion has gone on the more likely is the agreed solution to be just? Or that the less restricted the access to the discussion the more likely is the resulting agreement to be rational? Neither of these criteria seems really a convincing guide for action. Furthermore, if the context creates a tension between all these criteria derivable from the ideal speech situation, the *Diskursethik* proves even less able to orient action. Suppose that the available resources require us to choose between allowing more time for the discussion or having more participants for a shorter time, or between having more participants with more strategic moti-

33. See Habermas, "Diskursethik — Notizen zu einer Begründungsprogramm," *op. cit.*, p. 102.

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vations discussing for a longer time or very few good-willed actors with very little time for reaching agreement. What indication could we draw from the *Diskursethik* in this case? What would be best for us to do? Again, it is hard to derive from the *Diskursethik* a convincing answer. The only possible answer could be: to balance all the various factors (time, participation and motivation) in such a way as to best approximate the ideal speech situation.[34] But this is easier said than done. In fact, neither Habermas' concept of the ideal speech situation nor Apel's complementary principle of application contain any a-priori specification of the relative weight of the various aspects of the ideal speech situation (time, participation, motivation, reciprocity of role-taking, etc.) — nor is it easy to see how they could. Unless Apel is able to ground convincingly some a-priori grounding of priorities — e.g., "it is better to lose two points on the dimension of unrestricted participation if one point can be gained on the dimension of non-strategic motivation" — his complementary principle will not take us very far. The *balancing* of all the relevant elements that determine which of two alternative courses of action will bring us closer to the ideal speech situation still will have to be based on that kind of prudence or *phronesis*, about whose inner logic the *Diskursethik* has little to say.[35]

Habermas tries to counter the skeptic's objection that the supposedly contentless procedure for generating consensus about the *rightness* of norms presupposes a common vision of the *good* and that because the latter is culture-specific so is the former, by limiting the validity of this objection to a third-person approach to the issue. From the perspective of a moral actor directly involved in deliberation — argues Habermas — the issue of the relativity of the value-horizon within which he or she operates simply does not arise. Just as every scientist in trying to explain some phenomenon puts him or herself in the position of the last scientist and every historian takes on the epistemic role of the last historian, so every moral actor deliberates from the standpoint of the Last Judgment. While this is certainly so, it is not clear what we are to make of this fact. Why not call it an *illusion*, albeit a necessary one, to which moral

34. In fact, this is the solution suggested by Apel. In a recent paper, Apel tries to formulate a general principle underlying the correct application of (U). According to this principle, we should apply the *Diskursethik* in such a way as to reduce as far as possible the gap between the ideal speech situation and the actual communicative contexts. This principle of maximizing communicative patterns should for Apel render the neo-Aristotelian concept of *phronesis* superfluous. See K.O. Apel, "Kann der post-kantische Standpunkt der Moralität noch einmal in substantielle Sittlichkeit 'aufgehoben' werden? Das Anwendungsproblem der Diskursethik zwischen Utopie and Regression," paper presented at the Conference on "Moralität und Sittlichkeit," J.W. Goethe-Universität, Frankfurt, 18-22 March 1985. Also Habermas has recently turned his attention to the question of the principles underlying the *impartial application* of the *Diskursethik*. See Habermas, "Moral and Sittlichkeit. Treffen Hegels Einwände gegen Kant auch die Diskursethik zu?", paper presented at the Conference on "Moralität und Sittlichkeit," J.W. Goethe-Universität, Frankfurt, 18-22 March 1985. *Prima facie* it seems doubtful that such attempts to extend the morality-as-impartiality approach also to the problems of "application" can really solve difficulties which stem from the separation of issues of "grounding" and problems of "application" in the first place. However, Habermas' attempt to develop and answer along these lines is only at its beginning.

35. See also Benhabib's discussion of the ideal speech situation in her "The Methodological Illusions of Modern Political Theory: the Case of Rawls and Habermas," *op. cit.*, pp. 70-72.

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actors may succumb to various degrees? In fact, ethical competence has to do not only with the capacity for correctly applying the universalization procedure, but also with the ability to distance oneself from as large a section as possible of the horizon of values within which one operates. Thus, for example, we understand Kant's views on the opportunity to exclude women from suffrage as an almost inevitable reflection of the limitations of his historical situation. Yet his defense of the death penalty as the only adequate punishment for a murderer strikes us as somewhat less justified. Even less justified appears to us his idea that there is nothing wrong with killing an illegitimate child because, being born outside marriage, this child "is also outside the protection of the law."[36] In all three cases Kant offers a consistent application of the moral theory. Where does then our increasing repulsion for his first, second and third conclusion come from? It comes from our perception that to an increasing extent in all three cases he *could* have distanced himself from his value-horizon and yet failed to do so. We hold *him* more responsible for his views on infanticide than for his views on women's rights, because we imagine that it should have been easier to see through the time-boundedness of the values underlying leniency towards infanticide than through the discriminatory quality of patriarchal values. From this perspective, the fact that in the first-person attitude moral actors forget the relativity of their background values and claim universality for their applications of (U) should be cause for alarm rather than rejoicing. Our reaction to Kant's three conclusions shows that alongside the correct application of the universalization procedure there exists another dimension on which we evaluate the soundness of moral judgment. This other dimension has to do with the actor's ability to question as much as possible of the vision of the good which underlies his or her judgment about the right. And, in a society where the diversity of value-orientations is large, it has to do also with the ability to mediate, without compromising, different visions of the good. But the *Diskursethik*, just as Kant's ethics, can offer only a peripheral place to this dimension of *phronesis*. Suppose that in 18th century Königsberg Kant is summoned as a member of the jury at a trial where somebody is accused of infanticide and the defense pleads "not guilty" on account of the illegitimacy of the child. Suppose that the discussion within the jury comes sufficiently close to the ideal speech situation. Someone has the vague intuition that every child should be equally protected by the law but, needles to say, Kant makes the best argument. One could say: if only the debate went on longer, in the long run Kant would have been convinced. But let us suppose that none of the participants felt any pressure and all felt satisfied with ending the discussion at the point they did, with the agreement that the man should be acquitted. There is no way of saying, within the framework of the *Diskursethik*, that the jury's decision was wrong or unjust at the time when it was made. There is no way of saying that the intuition of the other member of the jury carried with it a more *pru-*

36. I. Kant, *The Metaphysical Elements of Justice*, Part I of the *Metaphysics of Morals*, (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965), p. 106.

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*dent* or *wiser* stance toward the values of the time and as such deserved at least as much consensus as Kant's more articulate argument. Leaving open for the moment the question of the ground on which we can now say that the jury's decision was *then* unjust, the inability to say so is one of the most serious consequences of Habermas' reducing *prudence* or *phronesis* to a mere psychological quality of the actor.

Furthermore, Habermas shares with Kant the disputable assumption that morality has to do with "*Gestzmässigkeit*." There are important differences between them, to be sure. Kant saw the "moral law" as something which could introduce into the evaluation of human action the same kind of unbending certainty that he associated with the synthetic a-priori basis of natural science. Habermas softens this tone very much when he speaks of a principle of universalization rooted in the presuppositions of discourse and to be used for a dialogical solution of moral conflicts. Yet, for both to act ethically evokes the image of following a rule or a procedure which alone can put us beyond reproach. At least, this image is evoked more readily by their moral views than the alternative image of acting ethically as exercising a virtuous character, as prudently furthering the good or as exercising empathy for others' needs. No sheer reversal of these priorities is here advocated, but rather a true mediation of the procedural and the prudential aspects of ethics.

Finally, much as Habermas wishes to distance himself from the Kantian notion of two distant "realms,"[37] that of necessity and that of freedom, his ethical and social views have not broken away completely from Kant's rigid dualism. Rather, Habermas' thought seems to reproduce the Kantian opposition of the phenomenal and the intellegible world under the new categories of the system and the life-world, of instrumental and communicative action. The limitations of this approach become clear in connection with the role of conflict, social and moral, within Habermas' views. Habermas, on one hand, wants to retain a positive role for conflict as a motor for the development of society. Yet, on the other hand, in a legitimate social order conceived along the lines of the *Theorie des kommunikativen Handelns* presumably the system will be kept in check by the life-world and its role in social reproduction will be limited to those dealings with outer nature which are necessary for the maintenance of society. However, one gets the impression that once eliminated the current excess of systemic influences on the life-world (colonization of the life-world), there will be nowhere for conflict to arise from. A life-world which reproduces its symbolic structures entirely and solely through communicative action — as it *ought* to be the case for Habermas — is bound to be a thoroughly pacified life-world. The illusory perspective of a conflict-free society, or of a society where conflict has been reduced to irrelevant quarrel, has not been eradicated completely from Habermas' social theory.[38] A paral-

37. See Habermas, "Moral und Sittlichkeit," *op. cit.*, p. 16.

38. For a detailed criticism of Habermas' transformation of his conceptual distinction of instrumental and communicative action into the misleading image of society as *de facto* split between the corresponding spheres of the system and the life-world, see A. Honneth, *Kritik der Macht,* (Frankfurt, 1985) chapter 5 and 6. Also, in Ch. 9 Honneth offers an interesting reconstruc-

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lel tension traverses Habermas' conception of ethics. Here Habermas often plays two dissonant themes. When he explicitly addresses the evaluation of life-forms or the issue of the "warring gods," he rightly acknowledges that values and cultural identities only come in the plural. Yet, when he discusses other aspects of his moral theory, again one receives the impression that for Habermas moral conflict originates only in the clash of strategic, and thus illegitimate, motivations and that if only we could rid ourselves of the undue pressure of system-imperatives and act communicatively throughout, there would be no moral conflicts but only a harmonious process of communal will-formation. Habermas seems to waver between two perspectives, neither of which is really viable for him. In fact, if moral conflict is only imported into social interaction through the undue influence of the system, then a Habermasian ideal society where interaction is undistorted cannot be distinguished from the Kantian "Realm of Ends." As in Kant's fictional world, also in Habermas' there would be no room for *real* diversity among moral actors and thus no real individuation either.[39] On the other hand, if Habermas wishes to maintain that even if the system was perfectly kept in check there would nonetheless be moral conflict, because moral actors would continue to interpret their needs and life-circumstances in the light of different (and sometimes competing) values, then his ethical theory appears somewhat off-balance. In fact, Habermas should then recognize that the question of how one can validly choose between values and of what constitutes prudence in this kind of choice are crucial issues. If even in the good society there will be moral conflicts, then the essential moral quality will still be that *phronesis* whose role Habermas tries to downplay.

To sum up, the problems of a recurrent overlooking of the real conditions under which moral judgment takes place, of an excessive emphasis on rules and procedures at the expense of *phronesis* or taste, and of a relative inability to orient human action, so typical of Kant's ethics, continue to haunt also Habermas' *Diskursethik*. Habermas' most recent tendency has been to accentuate this formalistic, but in his opinion better justifiable, approach and to abandon altogether his earlier overtures to what potentially could have developed into a more substantive (but not metaphysical) view of ethics. Here the memory of Stage 7 looms large. When, in *Communication and the Evolution of Society*, Habermas spoke of a seventh stage of moral reasoning, beyond the six outlined by Kohlberg, he characterized this stage as marking the transition from a "formalistic ethic of duty to a universal ethics of speech" (p. 93). One of the features which differentiated the proposed Stage 7 from Kohlberg's Stage 6 was the fact that "need interpretations are no longer assumed as given" but are drawn into the process of discoursive will-formation through their being rendered "communicatively fluid and transparent." Furthermore, the values through which needs are shaped and interpreted would also come to be

tion of the single theoretical decisions which have led Habermas to this new formulation of his theory of society.

39. For a similar argument, see Wellmer, *op. cit.*, p. 27, and Benhabib, *op. cit.*, pp. 71-2.

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fluidified and questioned. The guiding idea underlying Stage 7 morality was a "freedom that limits itself in the intention of reconciling — if not identifying — worthiness with happiness" (p. 94). It is unfortunate that this promising attempt to overcome a purely formalistic view of ethics has been subsequently given up by Habermas, who no longer considers Stage 7 a stage on its own and also questions the distinction between Kohlberg's Stage 6 and Stage 5. No one can deny the boldness of Habermas' suggestion: rather than dreaming of solving the problem of the "warring gods," the problem of the intersubjective validity of aesthetic interpretations, or the problem of "dirty hands," it is wiser for a postconventional moral actor to learn how to live with them. However, when Habermas suggests that, let alone a definitive solution, nothing really meaningful can be said about solving these problems, he is probably going too far. If on the one hand he accuses the skeptic of over-dramatizing these limitations of moral judgment, on the other hand he seems to exceed on the opposite dimension of a complacent optimism. No ethic can "live with these problems" and retreat into the invulnerable fortress of the transcendental-pragmatic foundation of (U). For, in so doing, such ethic would lose the ability to orient action and would thereby unwillingly vindicate Hegel's verdict, that any formalistic ethic is bound to remain an ingenious exercise of the intellect, totally irrelevant to life. The problem with Habermas' rescue of Kant's approach to ethics is that he has suceeded in *immunizing* Kant's case against Hegel's critique, but has so far failed to make Kant's ethic more relevant to life.

*Towards a Non-formalistic Diskursethik*

If the diagnosis sketched above is correct, what remedy could be adopted against the excessive formalism of the *Diskursethik*? We want a view of ethics which does not retreat into meta-ethical considerations and remains procedural and universalistic, but at the same time is better able than the *Diskursethik* as it stands now to orient our action in the world. This last requisite I take to imply that this ethic must not only contain a specification of rightness or justice, but must also say something about the good. Yet, this is problematic. Habermas is right when he claims that today no metaphysical grounding of the good life could be convincing and when he points to the dangers of Hegel's recourse to a "futurized *Sittlichkeit*" as a standpoint from which reason can then legislate upon the validity of life-forms. From this, however, he draws the dubious conclusion that a sound ethic should remain silent altogether on the subject of the good life. Thus Habermas' *Diskursethik* comes to occupy a peculiar position within contemporary moral philosophy. Compared to Rawls' ethic, for instance, Habermas' approach provides a more convincing account of the right, but because Rawls' theory also embeds a theory of the good — which Habermas lacks entirely — on the whole Rawls' ethic appears more relevant to life and more capable of orienting action. Why not try, then, *to incorporate a theory of the good* into Habermas' *Diskursethik*, in spite of his protestation that one cannot?

The project of correcting the formalistic flavor of the *Diskursethik* through

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adding a theory of the good to it meets with a basic difficulty. How are we to reconcile our modern diffidence toward all "positive" intimations of good values or good life-forms with the desire to avoid the pitfalls of formalism? I suggest that we take a "negative" approach to the good and combine it with proceduralism. That is, we will not specify what the good is, but will use only a formal notion of the good in order to keep in check the normative force of the best argument. We may never know what the good life is, but we can be in a position to say that certain ways of life, and the values which pervade them, are less conducive to the good than others.[40] Something similar occurs within aesthetic theory. Namely, the difficulty of providing a positive specification of the beautiful does not prevent us from pointing out how concrete works of art are more or less distant from embodying beauty. But is it not contradictory to maintain that a way of life is less conducive to the good than another, and at the same time to say that nobody can spell out what the good is? In order for one to say that X is less good than Y, must one not know already what the good is? No contradiction arises if one conceives the good in formal terms. One can conceive the good as the ability to live one's life as fully as one can, where "to live one's life fully" I take to mean — in contrast to other interpretations according to which it would mean "to live by the instant" — to undergo a succession of states and events, from birth to death, which can at any point in time be reconstructed as a coherent narrative, whatever the specific content of the narrative. It is part of the notion of a coherent narrative that it must include a protagonist and that this protagonist possesses, among other things, a quality called *autonomous agency*, which he or she exercises in the quest for something, i.e., in the process of realizing certain goals. A narrative where the protagonist accomplishes no action whatsoever is only an avant-garde experiment, not really a narrative. This vision of the good does not imply that one should look for money, power, glory, pleasure, recognition, good intimacy or any other specific thing. It does include the idea, however, that — as it is the case with narratives — also one's life is fuller and worthier the larger the number, extension and intricacies of the sub-plots and parallel themes which enrich the core without subtracting from the coherence of the whole. The telos of each individual's life-narrative is the acquisition of what is good for him or her. The good life for man, then, is the life spent in seeking the good life.[41] It is up to the individual to determine which concrete goals he or she is going to pursue, but at the same time not all choices are equally conducive to the attainment of the good, i.e., are equally likely to allow us to live our life fully. We could say, for instance, that a certain pattern of life is less conducive to the expression of a certain identity than another way of life, on the ground that the former life-

40. Recently, Habermas has attenuated his rejection of the idea that modern ethics might have anything to say about the worthiness of values or life-forms. Now he acknowledges the possibility of investigating the *necessary* conditions of a good life. See Habermas, "Questions and Counterquestions," *Praxis International* Vol. 4, No. 3, pp. 229-249.

41. See A. MacIntryre, *After Virtue*, (Notre Dame: The University of Notre Dame Press, 1981), p. 204. MacIntyre's account of the good life can be extracted from his neo-Aristotelian framework and used from a different perspective.

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style may undermine the autonomy of the person or is more likely to result in the fragmentation of the person's life-narrative into a series of unconnected sub-plots. The inner logic of this kind of judgment has been worked out by Kant in his discussion of aesthetic judgment and further elaborated along hermeneutical lines by Gadamer.[42] The key feature of this type of judgment is its "soft" universalism. That is, its validity does not depend on the factual agreement of other people, but rather points to what everybody *ought* to think, yet on the other hand its cogency can only be made plausible and not *demonstrated*. What is the *ethical* relevance, in terms of a theory of right, of this new vantage point which allows us to pass judgment, albeit with the "soft" cogency of aesthetic judgment, on the relative worthiness of values and ways of life? We must carefully avoid being misled by some tempting, yet erroneous, conclusions. In particular, we must avoid the conclusion that from the superior quality of somebody's life-plan follows any consequence — positive or negative — regarding his or her ethical claim to something. For example, we cannot say that what justified Jones' refusal to pay back his debt is the fact that his life-project is worthier than Bob's. The fact that on a separate dimension of judgment indeed we can say that Jones' life-plan is better than Bob's is not really the reason why he can be exempted from paying back his debt. Rather, the reason is that, if Jones loses his possibility to become a musician, his chance to attain the good life (in the way he defines it) is going to suffer a more devasting blow than Bob's if he has to renounce his sports car. On this basis we can say that, in the particular circumstances of our example, Jones ought to be granted an exemption from the general norm that debts should be paid back. It is against this kind of judgment, based on *phronesis* or taste as it applies to a vision of the good life, that the outcome of the ideal speech situation has to be balanced. But before going any further into the matter, we should deal with one important objection.

A defender of ethical formalism could raise the question: What if Bob protests that the car is as important to him as being a composer is to Jones? The question can be handled without difficulty from the perspective that I have tried to develop. In fact, two cases should be distinguished. In the first case Bob is right in his claim. Imagine, for instance, that becoming a champion of car-racing has long been Bob's secret dream and that buying that car was to him a first step in this direction. Then of course, under *these* conditions, Jones ought to pay. However, by raising this question and imagining Bob's self-perception as basically correct, the defender of formalism implicitly modifies our example in the sense of increasing the saliency of the car to Bob's identity. As a consequence, in a condition of equal saliency of what is to be lost, Jones' claim to an exemption from the norm applying to him is no longer justified. But this, in turn, shows with great poignancy that the decisive element in the whole matter is precisely the impact of one course of action or another on the identities of those involved and not the abstract claim to his money that Bob

42. See I. Kant, *The Critique of Judgement,* (New York: Hafner, 1951), § 30, 31, 32, 33. See H.G. Gadamer, *Truth and Method,* (New York: Continuum, 1975) pp. 33-55.

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can ground on the *Diskursethik*. Let us consider the second case. Bob only *says* that the car is so important to him, but in fact it is not. Then why should we be impressed by his claim? Why should Bob's protestation impress us more than, for instance, a possible protestation on the part of Kohlberg's druggist that to him money is as important as his wife's survival is to Heinz?

To sum up, to make use of a formal notion of the good in order to keep in check the normative force of the best argument does not mean that we bring our evaluation of the relative worthiness of life-plans to bear on questions of justice. It means, in a much weaker sense, that we balance the discourse-ethical standard of the best argument against the standard of the least disruptive impact on the identity needs of all those concerned. That is, if after the ideal speech situation has come to a satisfactory close one feels that the best argument fails to do complete justice to some identity needs that to one's considerate judgment would best be met by a solution in favor of which one is not able to make the best argument, then one is justified in disregarding the outcome of the ideal speech situation and in acting on one's best intuition.

Perhaps more problems are raised by such a formulation than we can hope to solve. Nor can I hope to address all of them in this context. Rather, I wish to develop a few considerations that are immediately brought to mind. First, what is the basis for such a decision? As we have seen, the basis on which we decide whether and to what extent the needs crucial to an identity are met by a given course of action is taste, or *phronesis*, as it applies to the actor's own vision of the good life. We do not want to judge a form of life from without but only from within, in terms of its chance to bring the actor as close as possible to the attainment of the good life. The relevant question that the actor endowed with *phronesis* asks about the best argument in the ideal speech situation is: does the course of action prescribed by the best argument deprive someone of something which is crucial to his or her chance to live a full life? And how crucial is this thing to the attainment of the good life? If we admit that such a question is part of ethics, alongside the universalization principle, and constitutes a substantive counterweight with which we can further scrutinize and, if necessary, appeal the outcome of the procedural component, then we can see the Königsberg jury example in a different light. Although Kant's suggestion to acquit the child murderer constitutes, by the uncoerced agreement of all the jury members, the best argument, each one of the jury members could *justifiedly* vote against Kant's verdict even if he or she had no counterargument but only the feeling or intuition that the irreversible loss suffered by the child should take precedence over all other considerations and orient the verdict. By incorporating a theory of the good into ethics we come to emphasize a parallel set of qualities, alongside the truthfulness and autonomy of judgment emphasized by procedural approaches to the right. These other qualities include the willingness and ability to take as much distance as possible from the horizon of values in which one lives, the willingness to achieve as much self-knowledge as possible, the courage to act on one's intuitions, but above all the ability to balance the "right-theoretic" intimation to live a life beyond re-

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proach against the "good-theoretic" intimation to express as much as one can of one's identity.

Second, an ethics which includes a theory of the good alongside the discourse-ethical component allows for a better comprehension of moral *change*. The conflict between a valid norm and a feeling, need or desire which could become a new norm in a just society yet to come constitutes a difficulty for all formalistic ethics, but in particular for the *Diskursethik*. Norms specify values. If the conflict occurs in a situation where on one hand we have the accepted values, embodied in valid norms, and on the other hand the mere feeling that something somehow does not work, and this feeling anticipates the creation of a new value or a substantial modification of the old values, then it is hard to see how, in an ideal speech situation taking place within the life-world of the time, anybody could make *the best argument* about a new norm based on value-choices yet to be made. Not only is it then difficult to explain how moral innovation comes about, but furthermore moral innovation is bound to appear, from this perspective, as a break with morality. Rousseau, in his novel *Julie, ou la Nouvelle Heloise*, offers a good example of this predicament. At one point in the plot Julie is faced with the following dilemma: either to flee from her oppressive family in order to live with her lover, thereby throwing her old father into despair, or to give up a relationship crucial to her identity and later contract a marriage to her father's liking, thereby jeopardizing her own chance to attain the good life. In the novel Julie, who does not share her father's values about the family and marriage, decides to give up her relationship on the Kantian ground that a state of happiness acquired at the expense of someone else's despair would not be a *deserved* happiness, but one tainted with guilt. As a result of her disregard for her own identity needs, Julie's life loses coherence, her self-perception becomes more shallow and fragmented, and in the end she acknowledges that for her to die means only to "die once more." Again, it is easy *for us* — two centuries thereafter — to say that the claim of Julie's father to a right to arrange a marriage for his daughter is void and creates no obligation for Julie and no problem for the moral philospher. The point is, however, that the innovative act of the first person who no longer regards that claim as valid, on the ground that it sacrifices too much on the side of the good, is bound to appear immoral from the standpoint of all ethic oriented solely to the right. It is the inadequacy of her own ethics — a powerful anticipation of the Kantian categorical imperative — that prevents Julie from *legitimately* playing that innovative role and ultimately condemns her to self-destruction. Nor could the *Diskursethik*, as it is formulated by Habermas, legitimate Julie is playing that role either.[43] When not outright immoral, moral innovation is likely to appear just as sentimentalism or sophistry to a conscience which reduces the practical to the right. In fact, these two notions (*affektierte Humanität* and *Sophisterei*) are used by Kant to characterize Beccaria's argument on the ethical indefensibility of capital punishment.[44] In-

43. See my *Autonomy and Authenticity,* Ph.D. Dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1984, pp. 334-7.

44. See I. Kant, *Metaphysik der Sitten,* (Hamburg: Meiner, 1966), pp. 162-3.

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stead, an ethic which includes a theory of the good may be in a better position to account for moral change. In a sense different from the one attributed to the expression "moral luck" by Bernard Williams,[45] the view of ethics which I wish to suggest does not purport to eliminate luck from ethical judgment altogether. Moral actors may find themselves in situations where it is sensible, *prudent*, to bet that the innovative value-choices implicit in their course of action will become the accepted choice at a later time. In a sense, their being right today depends on something being the case tomorrow. A formal but non-formalistic ethic must be able to accommodate this possibility and must specify what precisely is shared in common by all the situations where it is *prudent* for the actor to make this bet.

Third, in a still procedural but non-formalistic version of the *Diskursethik*, the outcome of the ideal speech situation (i.e., the line of conduct suggested by the best argument) has to be balanced against one's considered judgment as to the least possible disruption of the identity-needs of those concerned. We have mentioned the role of *phronesis* and of a formal notion of the good life in this judgment. Following Gadamer, we can reinterpret the Aristotelian concept of *phronesis* in the light of Kant's analysis of reflective judgment. Also, we can reframe the theory of the good life, as we have seen, in terms of the properties which every life-history must possess, no matter which concrete values pervade it. This knowledge about the general properties of the good life is no longer rooted in an ontology, but is based on the fallibilistic kind of knowledge provided by some disciplines, such as Freud's metapsychology or post-Freudian psychoanalytic theory or cultural anthropology. If in lieu of Kant's grounding of the principle of universalization in the noumenal aspect of man's nature we can accept a quasi-transcendental grounding of the same principle in an empirically falsifiable reconstruction of the presuppositions of discourse, why not accept, in lieu of Aristotle's metaphysics, an empirically falsifiable theory of the psychic requirements of a person's well-being? Just as the "linguistic turn" based on the theory of speech acts has allowed a rescue of Kant's transcendentalism, in my opinion the developments in psychoanalytic theory allow today a parallel "psychological turn," which can lead to a rescue of the Aristotelian doctrine of the good life along new, and fully modern, lines. For example, the notion of *eudaimonia*, as the quality of a life-pattern where several partial *goods* are combined within the totality of a person's pursuits in accordance with their proper weight and role, can be reinterpreted, on the basis of a psychoanalytic theory of self-identity, as the global coherence of an identity where all the crucial inner *needs* of a person are given their proper place.

Fourth, the two components of our ethical theory (i.e., the *Diskursethik* and the theory of the good) are centered on two moral qualities: autonomy and authenticity. Autonomy is the quality which philosophers such as Kant, Habermas or Rawls present as the key virtue of the moral actor. In their view, autonomy is defined by the actor's courage to stand by his or her ethical

45. See B. Williams, *Moral Luck*, (Cambridge, Cambridge U.P., 1981), pp. 20-39.

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intuitions (and to act on them) even in the face of adverse opinion on the part of the community. Authenticity, on the other hand, could be taken to mean, in a psychological sense, the complete and spontaneous coincidence of feeling and duty or the total transparency of motives to oneself. But here authenticity, as a moral quality, is defined as the actor's courage to stand by his or her ethical intuitions (and act on them) even in the face of a contingent inability to work them out adequately in the language of abstract reflection. These two qualities of the moral actor, which represent the paramount moral virtue respectively in early and contemporary modernity, are not mutually exclusive but complementary. Autonomous actors may acquire authenticity and, on the other hand, actors endowed with authenticity necessarily have autonomy in the Kantian-Habermasian sense. However, situations such as the Bob and Jones dilemma, or Julie's choice, or the Königsberg jury, may give rise to a tension between what we must regard as the best argument and the solution which will satisfy more, or disrupt less, of the identity needs at stake. Then, if this is the case, also the qualities of autonomy and authenticity come into tension, along with the ethical conceptions which emphasize each of them. Philosophers who privilege the right and autonomy over the good and authenticity advise us, in case of conflict, to side with our reflective constructs (be they monological generalizations or arguments in real discourses) because in the end there is no way of knowing which intuitions are good if not by testing them in the light of reason. Do not take a step — runs the advice — beyond what you can justify in terms of rational discourse. This alone will put your conduct beyond reproach and free you from guilt. Philosophers who privilege the good and authenticity, instead, do not simply equate ethical conduct and "putting oneself beyond reproach." They admit that furthering the good sometimes may not silence the claims of the right, but nonetheless should take precedence. Today's good is often tomorrow's right, but not vice-versa.

The fifth and final consideration concerns the different relation of our theory of the good life to the public sphere and to the private realm. From Machiavelli to Hegel to Weber, philosophers and social theorists have tended to accord politicians a greater leeway than to other citizens, when judgement has to balance the good against the principled expressions of the right. For intance, Weber's concept of an ethic of responsibility can be seen as the concept of an ethic of authenticity with its domain of validity restricted to the public sphere alone. Hegel's conception of the world-historical individuals allows those who act in the public sphere access to a higher standard of morality which will justify their trampling the right if they really contribute to move history toward the good. In my opinion, we should take the opposite path. Only in the private sphere are moral actors allowed to legitimately disregard the best argument if the best argument fails to meet their intuitions about the good in their circumstances of choice. In the public sphere, precisely because the stakes and the risks are so much higher, and often involve unaware (and obviously unconsenting) others, moral actors in general — and in particular politicians, who are entrusted the destiny of many others — should

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never step beyond the limits of what can be validated by consensus in the ideal speech situation. In this sense, the *Diskursethik* can receive its proper place within the realm of the practical. It should not be seen — as Habermas sometimes presents it — as an exhaustive reconstruction of our ability correctly to evaluate norms and conduct in all spheres of life, but as a specification of the standards for legitimate decision-making in the public sphere of a participatory democracy.

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# HABERMAS, NARCISSISM, AND STATUS

by Jeff Livesay

Recognition is central in both heremeneutics and critical theory. For Gadamer the "highest" form of hermeneutic experience involves understanding a text not by reducing its meaning to its author's intentions or its historical situation, but rather by recognizing it as a claim to truth. Genuine understanding is impeded both by approaching the text as a mere object and by failing to comprehend that the interpreter is ordinarily embedded in the very tradition as the text. It is only through a relation of mutuality with the text, through an openess to its truth claims, through what Gadamer calls a "fusion of horizons," that hermeneutic understanding can be achieved. And for Gadamer this openness to experience and to others' claims to truth is not only the essence of formal interpretation, but of all intersubjective understanding.

For Gadamer this openness does not mean ignoring one's prior views. Such a disregard of one's "forestructures of understanding" would produce an illicit self-understanding of the interpreter as a neutral observer rather than as a participant in dialogue and would ignore those very resources necessary for a discerning interpretation. Against the Enlightenment critique of traditional authority and its ideal of the entirely self-reflective person, Gadamer defends not only the inevitability, but also the utility of prejudices. Far from being the antithesis of reason, the authority of both persons and tradition is based on the free recognition of their superiority. Gadamer claims that ". . . the authority of persons is based ultimately, not on the subjection and abdication of reason, but on recognition and knowledge — knowledge, namely, that the other is superior to oneself in judgment and insight and for this reason his judgment takes precedence, i.e., it has priority over one's own. . . . Indeed, authority has nothing to do with obedience, but rather with knowledge."[1] Not only is obedience to traditional authority an act of reason, but the preservation of tradition is a free, active process growing out of the recognition of its legitimacy. "Even the most genuine and solid tradition does not persist by nature because of the inertia of what once existed. It needs to be affirmed, embraced, cultivated. But preservation is an act of reason, though an inconspicuous one. . . . Preservation is as much a freely-chosen action as revolution and renewal."[2] Thus, in attempting to establish his position between the extremes of the Enlightenment critique and the Romantic defense of tradition, Gadamer emphasizes both the massive power of tradition over our

1. Hans Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (New York, 1975), p. 248.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 250.



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opinions and attitudes through our "forestructures of understanding" and the free, rational nature of cultural reproduction. This latter aspect of Gadamerian hermeneutics bears a striking resemblance to the basic presuppositions of pluralist political theory and neo-classical economics. Because of his polemical stance against the Enlightenment, Gadamer loses sight of the elements of domination in tradition — domination grounded in inequalities of power and wealth and in the compulsions of collective defenses against unconscious motivations. If tradition, authority, and prejudice are to be rehabilitated, then cultural reproduction must be seen as an act of reason which is as freely chosen and as influential as the act of voting is supposed to be in a pluralist democracy and the registering of consumer preferences in a capitalist market economy.

Habermas follows Gadamer in stressing the significance of intersubjective understanding and recognition, but goes beyond Gadamer through the integration of psychoanalysis and the analysis of social systems into a critique of ideology. Yet, the increasing importance of recognition and the decreasing role of psychoanalysis in the face of the rising influence of genetic structuralist psychology in his recent work have caused Habermas to ignore some of the most significant barriers to the full actualization and institutionalization of interactive competencies. In particular, current psychoanalytic theories of narcissism suggest ways in which the selective and contradictory process of rationalization prevents the creation of the conditions for genuine intersubjective understanding. But the notions of "neurotic desymbolization" in Habermas' early work and "delinguistified steering media" later are closely related, and unconscious motivation is a crucial channel of delinguistification. Thus, the reactivation of the psychoanalytic dimension which has remained latent and largely unused since the early 1970s is an important antidote to the overly optimistic tone of his recent defense of Western reason and modernity.

Genuine intersubjective recognition in achieving an unconstrained consensus has always been a regulating ideal in Habermas. In *Knowledge and Human Interests* he grounds the knowledge of the historical-hermeneutic sciences in a primordial human interest in undistorted communication.[3] Much of Habermas' later work seeks to develop a universal pragmatics of speech and to reconstruct the presuppositions of communicative competence. Such competence involves not only the ability to produce grammatically correct sentences but also the capacity to establish through speech particular relations with the external world about which we can make true or false statements, the social world of shared norms and values, and the internal world of subjective experiences. For Habermas every speech act (often counterfactually) presupposes a background consensus about four validity claims — about an utterance's comprehensibility, the truth of its propositional context about the world, its rightness in light of the normative structures of the social world, and the sincerity of its expression of the speaker's intentions. The actual fulfill-

3. Jürgen Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests* (Boston, 1971), p. 176.

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ment of these validity claims creates the preconditons for "the possibility of unconstrained agreement and non-violent recognition" that are themselves the preconditions of social action.

In Habermas' recent work, intersubjective recognition has taken on a more central role. In the first volume of *The Theory of Communicative Action* he attempts to recast the utopian movement of the earlier generation of critical theorists in the terms of his own theory of communication. For Habermas, this earlier generation (especially Horkheimer and Adorno) reached a dead end because of the commitment to the philosophy of consciousness. Their pessimism about the necessary relation between the spread of Western reason and the intensification of the domination of both inner and outer nature was caused by their limited concept of reason. Horkheimer and Adorno identified reason in general with that form of instrumental reason which is the heir to the Cartesian philosophy of the subject. This model of reason was based on the logic of subject-object realtions in which there are ". . . exactly two fundamental relations that a subject can take up to possible objects. Under 'object' the philosophy of the subject understands everything that can be represented as existing; under 'subject' it understands first of all the capacities to relate oneself to such entities in the world in an objectivating attitude and to gain control of objects, be it theoretically or practically. The two attitudes of mind are representation and action. The subject relates to objects either to represent them or to produce them as they should be."[4] Against this equation of reason with the purposive-rational domination of nature and the instincts in the interest of self-preservation, Adorno and Horkheimer counterposed the impulse of *mimesis* as the hope for an enriching, rather than endangering, recognition of and reconciliation with the otherness of nature and fellow humans. But earlier critical theorists were unable to see such reconciliation as either a consequence of the development of reason or a potential result of political transformation. They could conceive of it only as impulse and saw it expressed only in the marginalized voice of avant-garde art. Habermas on the other hand, wants to reformulate the notion of reconciliation in light of his theory of communication between subjects.[5] Toward the end of the first volume of *The Theory of Communicative Action* Habermas refers to Mead as having '. . . already elevated symbolically mediated interaction to the new paradigm of reason and . . . based reason on the communicative relation between subjects, which is rooted in the mimetic act of role-taking."[6]

4. Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action*, vol. 1: *Reason and the Rationalization of Society* (Boston, 1984), p. 387.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 390.

6. *Ibid.* In *Mind, Self, and Society* Mead argues that the development of the religious attitude of altruistic neighborliness and the economic attitude of empathy for others' consumer needs in a market economy have created the possibility of a universal human society with a complex division of labor. For Mead the human capacity for empathy, for taking the role of the other, for intersubjective recongition is not a non-rational impulse (as it was for Horkheimer and Adorno), but rather the result of processes of both individual development and historical rationalization. As the capacities for social cooperation on the individual level are the product of a developmental learning process, so too are the possibilities of arriving at an unconstrained consensus in a

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In drawing upon Mead, Habermas is attempting to rejuvenate critical theory after the intellectual cul-de-sac caused by the critique of instrumental reason. Here, free mutual recognition of subjects standing in a relation of intersubjective understanding plays a crucial role. But this attempt comes at a less than ideal moment in the development of Habermas' work. His effort to develop a convincing theory of the possibilities of the communicative rationalization of society is jeopardized by the virtual exclusion of the psychoanalytic dimension in favor of a genetic structuralist psychology. Of course, Habermas has never been committed to psychoanalytic theory and he used psychoanalysis primarily as a methodological model. The controversy generated by the charges that Habermas had blurred the distinction between critical self-reflection and transcendental reflection in *Knowledge and Human Interests* led him to develop a more strongly theoretical program of the rational reconstruction of the ontogenetic development of cognitive, moral, and interactive competencies and to largely abandon his more hermeneutically-bound and psychoanalytically-informed program.[7]

But psychoanalysis played another, more substantive role in Habermas' earlier work. He utilized a linguistic interpretation of psychoanalysis to locate the origins of distorted forms of speech in processes of desymbolization similar to those of psychic repression which produce neurotic symptoms. The use of a linguisticized psychoanalysis to uncover meanings hidden by the desymbolization of speech allowed Habermas to locate the limits of Gadamerian hermeneutics which was ". . . based solely upon the normal competence of a speaker of a natural language to understand symbolically structured objects and events."[8] This substantive model of the internal sources of distorted communication, one which avoids the biologistic biases of much psychoanalytic theory, has unfortunately also taken a subordinate role in Habermas' later work. It is precisely such a psychoanalytically-informed theory of distorted communication which is needed to temper Habermas' currently overly optimistic vision of intersubjective recognition as the latent telos of a modernity undistorted by capitalism. Although he rhetorically acknowledges the importance of the negative dimensions of modernity, Habermas has failed to recognize the adverse impact of modern forms of differentiation and the colonization of the lifeworld on the degree of ego strength necessary to sustain a social order based upon intersubjective recognition and genuine communication. The revival of the early Frankfurt School's thesis of the end of the individual in the contemporary analysis of narcissism as the emerging character structure of advanced capitalist societies represents a serious challenge to Habermas' defense of modernity.

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functionally differentiated society through participatory democratic decision-making processes the result of historical processes of communicative rationalization.

7. Thomas McCarthy, *The Critical Theory of Jürgen Habermas* (Cambridge, Mass., 1981) pp. 91-110.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 191.

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Habermas' increasingly exclusive reliance on the genetic structuralist psychologies of competence development has led him to emphasize the most advanced *possibilities* of social action without adequately acknowledging the barriers to their actualization. In a 1974 lecture Habermas acknowledged the motivational prerequisites for the actualization of formal interactive competencies in practice by claiming that ". . . someone who possesses interactive competencies at a particular stage will develop a moral consciousness at the same stage, insofar as his motivational structure does not hinder him from maintaining, even under stress, the structures of everyday action in the consensual regulation of action conflicts. In many cases, however, the general qualifications for role behavior that are sufficient for dealing with normal situations cannot be stabilized under the stress of open conflicts. The party in question will then fall back in his moral actions, or even in both his moral actions and moral judgments, below the threshold of his interactive competence.[9] In other words, the instantiation in action of interactive competencies is always potentially mediated by motivational hindrances. Neurotic conflicts can certainly be one such hindrance. In not following through on his own crucial insight that motivational conflicts can inhibit the practical utilization of formal interactive competencies, Habermas allows his analysis of action to suffer from an extreme formalism and an inability to describe the actual patterns of social interaction that characterize contemporary life.[10]

The recent emergence of a new type of patient in psychoanalysis, one who suffers from a precarious sense of self as a result of a faulty process of separation from symbiotic unity with the mother, reflects the ambiguity of the achievement of a modern differentiated domain of subjectivity. The differentiation has not only allowed for the increased possibility of human autonomy and responsibility, but has also, given the broader historical circumstances accompanying its emergence, brought into being massive narcissistic defenses against the powerlessness and insignificance of the individual.

Kernberg describes the narcissistic personality this way: "These patients present an unusual degree of self-reference in their interactions with other people, a great need to be loved and admired by others, and a curious apparent contradiction between a very inflated concept of themselves and an inordinate need for tribute from others. Their emotional life is shallow. They experience little empathy for the feelings of others, they obtain very little enjoyment from life other than from the tribute they receive from others or

9. Habermas, "Moral Development and Ego Identity," in *Communication and the Evolution of Society* (Boston, 1979), pp. 91-92.

10. Anthony Giddens' analysis of the unacknowledged conditions of action in his emerging theory of structuration shares Habermas' interest in human competencies in its focus on the generative (semantic and normative) rules that constitute social actors' taken for granted practical consciousness. But Giddens' attention to unconscious motives as an additional unacknowledged condition of action with analytical importance equivalent to that of practical consciousness represents an improvement over Habermas' relegation of the unconscious to the margins of his theory. See Giddens' *New Rules of Sociological Method* (New York, 1976) and *Central Problems in Social Theory* (Berkeley, 1979).

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from their own grandiose fantasies. . . . They envy others, tend to idealize some people from whom they expect narcissistic supplies and to depreciate and treat with contempt those from whom they do not expect anything. . . . In general, their relationships with other people are clearly exploitative and sometimes parasitic. It is as if they feel they have the right to control and possess others and to exploit them without guilt feelings and, behind a surface which is very often charming and engaging, one senses coldness and ruthlessness. Very often such patients are considered to be dependent because they need so much tribute and adoration from others, but on a deeper level they are completely unable to depend on anybody because of their deep distrust and depreciation of others."[11] The narcissistic tendency to use others as mirrors to bolster a sense of self contaminated by feelings of inner emptiness represents a significant barrier to the development of the conditions for mutual recognition so important to Habermas. Not only do the narcissist's intense envy of, lack of empathy for, and need to exploit others prevent the realization of genuine intersubjective understanding and frame all social action in desperately stragetic terms, but they also threaten the accomplishment of decentration that Habermas sees as the very hallmark of modernity with a recentration of the world in the egocentric prespective of the narcissist.

Virtually all of the crucial features of narcissism undermine the preconditions for intersubjective recognition. Since the deepest stratum of the narcissistic personality is characterized by a sense of inner emptiness which results from unempathic parenting and unsuccessful individuation during the pre-Oedipal years, the narcissist is profoundly dependent on the admiration of others for a sense of self-esteem. This dependence calls up an intense rage toward those on whom the narcissist depends — because of the inevitable disjunctions between the grandiose expectations the narcissist brings to social encounters and the actual degree of admiration he or she receives, because of the envy of others' apparent fullness in comparison with narcissist's emptiness, and because of the anger at the extent of the narcissist's dependence on others. The basic narcissistic defense against his rage is the devaluation of others. If others are actually worthless objects to be manipulated and exploited at will, there is little about them to be envied. Although this devaluing defense helps to mitigate narcissistic rage, it also prevents the narcissist from entering into genuine social relations and exacerbates his or her sense of inner emptiness. This cycle of emptiness, envy, rage, devaluation, and reproduced emptiness renders genuine intersubjectivity impossible and prevents the attitude of openness toward the perspective of the other.

Furthermore, Kernberg, following Mahler, argues that narcissism involves a failure to achieve "objective constancy" — i.e., to develop self- and object-representations which include mixtures of positive and negative qualities. According to Kernberg, narcissists defend themselves against the fear gene-

11. Otto Kernberg, *Borderline Conditions and Pathological Narcissism* (New York, 1975), pp. 227-228

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rated by unempathic, double-binding parenting through the splitting off of a pathological grandiose self which fuses the ideal self, the actual self, and the ideal object and the projecting of all unacceptable impulses and bad self- and object-representations onto others.[12] This lack of integration of good and bad elements in the narcissists' images of self and others means that they experience self and others as either all-good or all-bad. In addition, the narcissist experiences disruptive oscillations of both images between these two modes. The self is seen at times as grandiose, omnipotent, and all-good and at other times as worthless, empty, and all-bad. Thus narcissistic defenses prevent the realistic perception of both self and others as complex mixtures of good and bad qualities and encourage their perception as either entirely worthless or completely grandiose. This is a shaky foundation on which to build the skills of empathic role-taking, openness to the truth claims of the other, communicative competence, and intersubjective recognition. Narcissists are faced with the onerous burden of endlessly attempting to heal the doubts about themselves before they can attend to the perspectives and needs of others. The narcissist can take the other into account only insofar as such knowledge has utility in the strategic manipulation of the other in order to meet the narcissist's needs to be mirrored and admired. Although narcissists develop skills at perceiving the expectations, tastes, and needs of others, such competencies constitute a pseudo-empathy, since such information is inevitably utilized in a strategic rather than a communicative context. To the extent that the speech acts of the narcissist are surreptitiously intended to maintain a sense of self rather than convey their manifest meaning, the goal of communication shifts from an orientation toward reaching understanding to an orientation toward success, from communicative action to strategic action. Now Habermas is quite aware that communicative action can be distorted in this way. He recognizes, for example, that ". . . dramaturgical action can take on latently strategic qualities to the degree that the actor treats his audience as *opponents* rather than as a public."[13] Such dramaturgical action is constituted by perlocutionary acts ". . . which must be carried out by speech acts, under the condition that the actor does not declare or admit to his aims as such."[14] In such perlocutionary acts, designed to bring something about through speech without the knowledge of the hearer and, in the case of narcissistically deformed communication, intended to gain the hearer's admiration and deference, at least one of the validity claims of speech that Habermas posits as a universal warrant of all speech acts — the claim to truthfulness or sincerity — is placed in jeopardy.

One of Habermas' responses to this would probably be that even strategic action presupposes a more primary orientation toward reaching understanding, that the illocutionary aims of speech must be achieved if its perlocu-

12. Kernberg, "Narcissism," in Sander L. Gilman (ed.), *Introducing Psychoanalytic Theory* (New York, 1982), pp. 133-134.
13. Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action*, vol. 1, p.93.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 292.

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tionary aims are to be realized.[15] Habermas' argument for the primacy of communicative action over strategic action is aimed at his vision of communicatively rationalized social coordination in which hearers are moved to accept others' speech acts on the basis of their uncoerced approval of those acts' warrants or validity claims rather than on the basis of the threat of sanction. In *The Theory of Communicative Action* Habermas' effort to find in the structure of communication a normative foundation for a post-capitalist participatory democracy has caused him to blur the distinction made in his earlier work between a genuine consensus and a pseudo-consensus. In his most recent work he does not confront the question of what criteria might be used to distinguish between a genuine acceptance of the validity claims made by a speech act and a merely *de facto* accord motivated by pragmatic considerations. Habermas is more interested here in working out the philosophical foundation of a society coordinated by communicative rationality than in analyzing the complexities of historically situated forms of distorted communication. This leads him to underestimate the detrimental impact of forms of psychopathology such as narcissism on the further advance of communicative rationalization and the ways in which the project of modernity with its modes of differentiation (expressed in its most pernicious form in the detailed division of labor) undermines the formation of autonomous subjects capable of fully utilizing the resources of a communicatively rationalized lifeworld.

However, so many of the basic features of Habermas' theory resonate with the emerging sociological theory of narcissism that it can be integrated into Habermas' program without threatening it. Habermas has understood psychopathology as originating in the inadequate social interpretation of needs, and narcissism can be understood as such a pathology caused by the contradictory thematization of human dignity. Second, Habermas' earlier work on neurotic defense as a "desymbolizing" distortion of communication can be reintegrated into his more recent work through a reconceptualization of his notion of "delinguistified steering media" and its extension beyond his examples of money and bureaucratic power to status, which is now motivationally secured through narcissistic character structures.

In summarizing Habermas' conception of ego development, McCarthy writes that ". . . the ego develops in and through the integration of 'inner nature' into the universal structures of language, thought, and action. . . . Unless the subject is able to interpret his needs adequately in these universal structures, development may be pathologically deformed."[16] According to McCarthy, Habermas recognizes that the structural dimension of identity formation as the acquisition of universal competencies must be supplemented by consideration of affect and motive formation."[17] Habermas legitimately wants to employ a "communication-theoretic" reading of psychoanalysis which dispenses with the biological theory of drives in ". . . replacing

15. *Ibid.*, p. 94.
16. McCarthy, *The Critical Theory of Jürgen Habermas*, pp. 338-339.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 339.

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'drive energies' with 'interpreted needs' and describing 'instinctual vicissitudes' from the perspective of the formation of identity and the dynamics of interaction."[18] As he articulated it at an earlier stage in his work, ". . . at the human level we never encounter any needs that are not already interpreted linguistically and symbolically affixed to potential actions."[19] This perspective on needs situates Habermas' thought much closer to that of the ego psychologists and object relations theorists than to the instinctual reading of Freud adopted by earlier critical theorists. And it is precisely the former theoretical traditions out of which recent theories of narcissism have emerged. Kernberg, for example, completely dispenses with libido theory and locates the origins of narcissism in the contradictions of parenting which is simultaneously exceptionally admiring and extremely cold and rejecting. This double-binding contradiction can certainly be seen as one form of what Habermas refers to as the inadequate interpretation of needs.

Kernberg's position on the etiology of narcissism is strikingly close to Lichtman's recent attempt to develop a Marxist critique of the reified notion of the instincts in psychoanalysis. Lichtman argues that "defenses are not barriers against pre-existing instincts which deflect an original aim through a series of detouring vicissitudes. The elaboration of defenses shapes the inclinations 'against which' the defenses are ostensibly required. Force and counterforce, the paradigm of Freud's metapsychology on either an economic or symbolic interpretation, are dialectically defined through the imposition of contradictory social criteria."[20] It is precisely a set of such contradictory modes of recognition that create the conditions for the production of pathological narcissism. The most basic contradiction here is between the lifeworld and the system — in particular, between popular expectations of the achievement of autonomous ego identity, on the one hand, and the systemic undermining of the ego strength necessary to sustain this developmental level of identity, on the other, through the dependency fostered by the private ownership and control of the means of production, the hierarchical division of labor, the administered policy, and the structural limits imposed on social action by the logic of the market. This contradiction is experienced in at least two ways — as one between the expectation of self-determination in the absence of previously significant modes of personal domination and the reality of dependence on abstract structural processes, and as one between the aspirations for individual success and the reality of limited achievements which are often experienced as personal failures. Sennett and Cobb refer to the experience of the latter contradiction as "flawed humanism."[21] This illustrates the deficiencies of modes of recognition characterized by disjunctions

18. Habermas, "Questions and Counterquestions," *Praxis International*, 4:3 (October 1984), pp. 229-249.

19. Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, p. 285.

20. Richard Lichtman, *The Production of Desire: The Integration of Psychoanalysis into Marxist Theory* (New York, 1982), pp. 191-192.

21. Richard Sennett and Jonathan Cobb, *The Hidden Injuries of Class* (New York, 1973), p. 256.

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between the legitimating ideologies of self-determination and individual achievement and the practical realities of dependency and personalized failure.[22] Modern societies provide their members with interpretations of their need for recognition that cannot be readily gratified through social practice. Habermas' model of the social evolution of competencies appears to draw upon the legitimating ideals of the contemporary period and describe modes of identity formation that relatively few members of contemporary societies are able to realize in practice. His model ignores the impact on the process of identity formation of forms of psychopathology generated by the inadequate, contradictory interpretation of needs. In the case of narcissism, these contradictions extend from the level of cultural values and system outcomes into the modes of parenting predominant in the contemporary period. Insofar as many people must cope with a disjunction between their aspirations and their achievements, vicarious participation in the successes of their children becomes one way of extending the possibilities of their own achievement. These parents both instill a sense of grandiose possibility and specialness in their children who are supposed to accomplish what their parents never could and cause their children to feel rejected since their parents' interest in them is not genuine but rather motivated by their own personal concerns. Such parenting produces conflicting interpretations of these children's needs for recognition. On the one hand, they are encouraged to see themselves as exceptionally talented and special, and, on the other, the absence of parental empathy makes them feel rejected, unworthy, and (in extreme cases) nonexistent. This type of parenting produces the contradictory double binds which Kernberg and others identify as the developmental source of pathological narcissism. Narcissistic defenses utilize this parentally-induced sense of grandiosity as a protection against this terrifying existential insecurity.

Pathological narcissism involves a regression in the face of stress generated by these social contradictions and familial double binds. According to Habermas' model of ego development, the crisis of adolescence is ideally resolved in a movement beyond the sociocentric-objectivistic stage of development to the universalistic stage in which a genuine ego identity can be formed through which young adults ". . . can burst the sociocentrism of a traditional order and can understand (and if necessary criticize) existing norms as mere conventions in light of principles."[23] Narcissists, on the other hand, because of their failure to achieve adequate individuation and separation during their pre-Oedipal period, are continually threatened by regression to an earlier egocentric stage of development in which the demarcations between the ego and its environment (especially other persons) is put into question. Such a regression places in jeopardy some of the basic forms of differentiation Habermas attributes to the project of modernity — especially the decentra-

22. Lillian Rubin, *Worlds of Pain: Life in the Working Class Family* (New York, 1976) and Michael Lewis, *The Culture of Inequality* (New York, 1978).

23. Habermas, cited in McCarthy, *The Critical Theory of Jürgen Habermas*, p. 340.

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tion of the self through the differentiation between the subjective world of inner experience and the social world of other persons. As a defense against the self-nihilating consequences of the recognition of otherness, the narcissist must devalue and reduce others to mere mirroring functions. In other words, the nihilation of otherness becomes a defense against the nihilation of the empty and unworthy self that the recognition of others might bring. Under these circumstances the creation of genuine bonds of social solidarity is extremely difficult.

One of the central themes of the second volume of *The Theory of Communicative Action* has to do with the "decoupling of system and lifeworld" in modern societies. For Habermas the lifeworld is constituted by those action orientations that coordinate social action through the symbolic mediation of language. The lifeworld is a taken for granted set of typifications, normative codes, and belief systems that generate the symbolic reproduction of societies. On the other hand, a self-regulating system involves the coordination of action through the functional interconnection of action consequences. One result of this decoupling of system and lifeworld, first begun in the differentiation of the market economy from the traditional lifeworld of medieval European society, was the emergence of means other than language for the coordination of action — what Habermas refers to as "delinguistified steering media."[24] The two examples of delinguistified steering media Habermas provides are money and administrative or bureaucratic power. The development of the modern economy and polity into formal subsystems guided by these delinguistified steering media partially transforms the lifeworld into a mere environment for the system to be manipulated in ways that assist in system-maintenance. Habermas calls this subordination of the lifeworld to the needs of the system of material reproduction the "colonization of the lifeworld." This colonization operates through the commodification, monetarization, and bureaucratization of the cultural forms and normative expectations of the lifeworld. For Habermas, as more and more spheres of the lifeworld are organized according to systems logic in order to make them manageable environments, the potential for a crisis of social integration is generated by the destruction of meaningful cultural traditions on which people can draw in their social action and in the socialization of new members of the society. But Habermas' analysis of the colonization of the lifeworld can be extended in an important way by recognizing the parallels between neurotic character structures and delinguistified steering media. Such an understanding is already anticiapted in Habermas' earlier work on distorted communication in which he uses Lorenzer's linguistic reading of psychoanalysis to interpret neuroses as *desymbolized* and pathologically frozen patterns of communication. Neurotic symptoms in this reading are constructed through the repression of psychic conflicts in which the symbolic representations associated with those

24. McCarthy, "Translator's Introduction," in Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action*, vol. 1, pp. xxix-xxx.

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conflicts are desymbolized and transformed into rigidly fixed, only indirectly meaningful stereotypes.[25] Habermas argued that neurotic symptom formation results in a distortion of communication through the privatization of the meanings of speech acts and that this privitization brings about a *delinguistification* of action: "Through the mechanism of repression, conscious motivations present in the public use of language are transformed into unconscious, as it were delinguisticized, motives."[26] Social action oriented toward neurotic defense is at best pseudo-communicative and substitutes the strategic, teleological goal of the defense against repressed impulses or memories for an orientation toward reaching understanding. The delinguistified nature of neurotically-structured action in Habermas' earlier work parallels his emphasis on the delinguistification of the steering media of the economy and polity in his more recent work. The reintroduction of his earlier psychoanalytic considerations would extend Habermas' analysis of the colonization of the lifeworld through the recogntion of how patterns of interaction in everyday life can be partially delinguistified through the orientation of action toward the strategic goal of neurotic defense.

Habermas' recent efforts to reorient critical theory through what might be called its "desubjectification" have led him to emphasize the importance of subject-subject (communicative) relations (as opposed to the subject-object model which characterized the thought of Marx, Weber, and the Frankfurt School) and to move from an earlier interest in the self-reflective ego to a more recent one on the lifeworld as the tacit background of social action. The latter move, which has paralleled the development of his thought from critique to rational reconstruction and has diminished the importance of Freud to his project, impedes Habermas' full consideration of one of the crucial components of the lifeworld — personality. One of the ways in which systems logic penetrates into the lifeworld is through the neurotic deformation of personality. It is possible to develop a *sociological* model of collective neurotic responses to cultural contradictions and parental double binds that both escapes the physicalistic bias of much of psychoanalysis and focuses on the importance of subject-subject relations and language in the etiology of neurosis.

The parallels between the characteristics of delinguistified steering media and neurotic character structures are striking. First, steering media are designed to increase the manageability of a system's environment by reducing its complexity. A system can be more effectively maintained in the face of an environment whose contingencies have been diminished by the *standardization* of its responses. Neurotic character structures are the means of standardizing the responses of inner nature and subordinating the lifeworld (as environment) to the logic of the system through the medium of personality. In his earlier work, Habermas often refers to psychopathologically distorted speech as a way of rendering social action rigid, inflexible, fixated, and com-

25. Habermas, "On Systematically Distorted Communication," *Inquiry*, 13:3 (1970), p. 214.

26. Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, p. 276.

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pulsively repetitious.[27] Since neurosis is an unacknowledged defense against a psychic conflict that itself cannot be consciously acknowledged, the neurotic is compelled to repeat the same rigidly defined defensive patterns of behavior whenever such defenses are aroused. In *Knowledge and Human Interests*, Habermas apparently approvingly paraphrases Freud in this way: "What characterizes institutions is at the same time what constitutes their similarity with pathological forms. Like the repetition compulsion from within, institutional compulsion from without brings about a relatively rigid reproduction of uniform behavior that is removed from criticism."[28] To the extent that neurotic behavior is the result of socially structured cultural contradictions and common modes of socialization, social action becomes standardized. Neurotic behavioral responses are inflexibly automatic rather than the result of conscious and rational self-reflection.

Socially shared neurotic repetition compulsions represent the *delinguistified* mediatization of the lifeworld. According to the systems theoretic approach to social reproduction, the development of nonlinguistic steering media makes social action more efficient by predefining social situations and diminishing the need to define each social encounter through discourse. For example, both money as a narrowly defined and universally understood medium of economic action and bureaucratic power reduce the need for continual discourse on the definition and justification of rights and obligations. This apparent increase in the efficiency of social reproduction through the coordination of interaction through media other than the discursive use of language and the subsequent reduction in the need for communicative action and increase in the frequency of strategic action are additional characteristics of delinguistified steering media. Neurotic behavior is oriented toward the technical, strategic goal of psychic defense rather than toward the communicative goal of reaching intersubjective understanding. Like delinguistified steering media, neurosis tends to technicize action and establish strategic action as the prototype of all social action. Of course, like monetarized economic behavior and bureaucratic action, neurotically distorted interaction occurs through the medium of language. The point here is that the deepest level of such interaction is oriented toward the strategic goal of psychic defense rather than toward intersubjective understanding. It is precisely when the defensive apparatus of neurotic character structure produces consequences which stabilize the political-economic system that system reproduction proceeds most efficiently.

The strategic goals of narcissistic ego defenses produce consequences which serve to stabilize the system of advanced capitalism — in particular, by stimulating consumerist behavior designed to compensate for the psychic experience of inner emptiness and by discouraging political activism among people more concerned about healing their doubts about themselves than

27. Habermas, "On Systematically Distorted Communication," pp. 206-207; *Knowledge and Human Interests*, pp. 226-227.

28. Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, p. 276.

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about transforming social institutions. Thus, system reproduction is an *unintended* consequence of action oriented on the level of personality toward the strategic goal of neurotic defense. This occurs through the reduction of the complexity of the personality dimension of the lifeworld in the process of standardizing and automatizing behavior and through the shrinkage of the role of language in the coordination of social action.

Narcissistically organized forms of interaction are structured through the steering medium of *status*, the social currency of grandiosity which compensates for the sense of unworthiness and emptiness that is at the core of narcissistic character structure. Action under these conditions becomes oriented toward the optimization of status exchanges rather than toward achieving a rational consensus. If money and bureaucratic power serve as the steering media of advanced industrial societies' relation with outer nature and the coordination of the social world respectively, status (now motivationally secured through the logic of narcissistic defense rather than through tradition) structures the social context in which inner nature is integrated into personality and identity. If money and bureaucratic power transform moral-practical issues into technical ones, status, as the socially provided resource for narcissistic defense, deforms the expressive dimension of human action. As a medium for organizing the lifeworld, it subverts the possibilities of genuine communication by externally enhancing the validity claims of speakers with high status and consequently undermining the importance of speech acts' internal validity claims, by subverting the particular internal validity claim of truthfulness and sincerity through the overvaluation of appearance and image in interpersonal relations, and by diminishing the likelihood of the intersubjective recognition which is a precondition for all communicative action. This reconceptualization of status as a delinguistified steering medium anchored in the logic of neurosis offers a way of extending Habermas' thesis of the decoupling of system and lifeworld to the final element of Weber's multidimensional conception of inequality. The organization of social interaction as status competition for narcissistic defense undermines the possibility of the communicative rationalization of modern processes of identity formation in the wake of the collapse of traditional modes of production, legitimation, and identity formation. Codes of status define the exchange value of forms of cultural capital and represent the further intrusion of the logic of the commodity into the lifeworld spheres of personality and everyday life. The self becomes a production site at which identity is continualy forged through the display of distinguished tastes defined by codes which are often only tacitly known.[29]

29. This analysis of status as a steering medium of the lifeworld through the dimension of personality parallels Habermas' description of the lifeworld in advanced capitalist societies. His brief discussion of "the syndromes of civil and familial-vocational privatism" as the central motivational elements of the socio-cultural system of advanced capitalism includes three crucial features of narcissistically structured and status-mediated action — ". . . an interest in the steering maintenance . . . performances of the administrative system but little participation in the legitimizing process, . . . [and] developed interests in consumption and leisure on the one hand,

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This reconceptualization of status as a delinguistified steering medium grounded in narcissistic defense represents one possible avenue for the reintegration of Habermas' earlier psychoanalytic work into his more recent theory of the modern decoupling of system and lifeworld. But is the theoretical usefulness of understanding delinguistified steering media as instances of neurotic desymbolization limited to the relation between status and narcissism, or can this formulation be extended to understanding money and bureaucratic power as themselves grounded in neurotic character structure? The extensive psychoanalytic literature on the unconscious motivational sources of the accumulation of money and the worship of authority suggest that all delinguistified steering media may be motivationally grounded in the process of neurotic desymbolization. The tendencies for the acquisition of money and bureaucratic power to become ends in themselves in modern systems logic points to a distorted instrumental logic parallel to that of neurotic compulsion. In Habermas' terminology, the particular steering media which structure our relation with outer nature and coordinate the social world may generate particular personality types which constitute our inner world of subjectivity.

Habermas' criticism of Luhmann's claim that the logic of social integration can be entirely subordinated to the logic of system integration sets the stage for his analysis of the crisis-generating effects of the colonization of the lifeworld. Habermas argues that to the extent that traditional forms of meaning and discursive modes of producing meanings are destroyed through the commodification and bureaucratization of the lifeworld in the interest of material reproduction, the symbolic reproduction of society is threatened and the production of competent social actors is undermined. Modern societies with differentiated institutional spheres produce radically fragmented life experiences, social role sets, and self-conceptions among their members and require the capacity to establish ego identities which can integrate these fragments into a coherent sense of self. But modern societies also fail to provide their members with the socializing experiences or the resources necessary to sustain such ego identities — hence, the tendency toward regression to earlier stages of ego development. The colonization of the lifeworld is *both* a necessary attempt to reduce the system's environmental complexity *and* a subversion of the capacities of the lifeworld to reproduce itself symbolically. Neurotic character structure represents the operation of this crisis logic at the level of personality. It simultaneously reduces the system's environmental complexity by defining social expectations in ways capable of being at least partially satisfied in a commodity intensive society and rigidifies action orientations in a way that limits the flexibility of the system's response to changing environmental conditions. Narcissistic character structures *both* reproduce the system of advanced capitalism through the depoliticization and status commodification of behavior *and* undermine the productivist mentality of

and in a career orientation suitable to status competition on the other." Cf. Habermas, *Legitimation Crisis* (Boston, 1975), p. 75.

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capitalist culture, subvert the possibilities of achieving rational legitimating consensuses, and render people increasingly and dangerously incompetent in the face of a system which generates and is sustained by their limited competence. In addition, narcissistic character structure inhibits the further communication rationalization of modern societies and discourages the full utilization of those dimensions of the lifeworld already rationalized.

The organization of the lifeworld according to the logic of neurosis is both system-maintaining and crisis-producing. Habermas' commitment to a genetic structuralist psychology and de-emphasis of psychoanalysis in his recent work have caused him to focus on the progressive evolution of the formal possibilities of social action without fully appreciating the ways in which the neurotic deformation of personality reproduces systems logic at the deepest levels of the lifeworld and prevents the full practical realization of those formal opportunities. A revival of the psychoanalytic dimension which lies dormant in Habermas' theory can help to correct this imbalance.

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# Notes and Commentary

## LIMITATIONS OF THE LIBERAL-LEGAL MODEL OF INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS: SIX LESSONS FROM EL SALVADOR

By Ken Anderson & Richard Anderson

To subject the international human rights movement to a purely theoretical critique cannot help but suggest a certain mean-spiritedness. After all, no one knows better than those in the front lines of human rights work exactly what, in terms of lives lost and atrocities suffered, the movement has been unable to achieve. The religious workers of the Salvadoran Archdiocese, the legal aid lawyers of Paraguay who affirm conscience over prudence, the founders of the Moscow chapter of Amnesty International, the prisoners in South Africa charged with treason for denouncing apartheid — they and their co-workers hardly need reminding by arm-chair academics that the tools of the human rights movement are laughably weak and that their best efforts save only a selection of individuals in a near-endless stream of victims.

Nevertheless, there remains a need to take stock of the fundamental conceptions of the human rights movement at a level more abstract than the day to day body count in El Salvador. The demands on the international human rights movement have grown in the past decade, both in the quantity of cases brought within the purview of worldwide governmental and non-governmental agencies as well as in the kinds of claims sought to be included under the aegis of human rights.[1] The quantitive increase inevitably causes one to wonder whether the human rights movmement's legalistic liberal model is suitable in situations of *massive* violations. And the variety of claims causes one to wonder what ought to be counted as a human right and why, and whether there are any conceptual limitations on the notion of human rights generated by the model of international liberal legality.

The following remarks attempt nothing so ambitious as a critique of human rights at the level of a critique of liberalism itself. Instead this discussion does nothing more than outline six particular theses about the limitations of the legalistic conception of human rights, drawn from direct experience doing human rights work in El Salvador.[2]

1. Whether or not there has been an actual increase in the quantity of cases or just improved reporting is not clear. Amnesty International refrains from making a judgment either way in *Torture in the Eighties* (Amnesty International Publications, London, 1984, p. 2). The increase in *kinds* of cases largely stems from the assertion that so-called economic rights and rights of peoples are to be counted among human rights. The inclusion of economic rights in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of December 10, 1948 gave the initial impetus to international jurisprudence on the topic. For a recent twist on the concept, see Rhoda Howard, "The Full-Belly Thesis: Should Economic Rights Take Priority Over Civil and Political Rights?" *Human Rights Quarterly,* Vol. 5, No. 4, Nov. 1983.

2. Ken Anderson spent August 1984 doing fieldwork in El Salvador, primarily with Tutela Legal; his work there is quoted in the 1985 Americas Watch Supplement to the *Report on Human Rights in El Salvador.* June and July, 1984 he spent working for the Interamerican Court of Human Rights of the Organization of American States in Costa Rica and Nicaragua. These six claims were



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These theses are theoretical inasmuch as each draws some kind of general lesson from the concrete experience of human rights activity in El Salvador, but they do not aim to be a meta-critique showing how these theses might be generated from the larger limitations of liberalism. We hope that the absence of high-level theory will be compensated for by the presence of concrete experience. The six theses, then, in summary fashion:

(1) The international human rights movement tends to save particular individuals caught within institutions of state terrorism, rather than dismantling those institutions.

(2) In the prevailing legalistic model of human rights, abuses of human rights must necessarily be viewed as violations of law, no matter how widespread and systematic they are; even when abuses are numerically the norm, they are still characterized as deviations from the norm in order to preserve the model of legality.

(3) The massive violation of human rights is frequently within the rational self-interest of a regime.

(4) The legalistic model forces human rights advocates to emphasize constitutional texts and international legal instruments despite their apparent irrelevance to the political realities.

(5) The human rights movement consistently stops short of pronouncing a regime *illegitimate,* however massive its human rights abuses.

(6) The demand by human rights organizations that a regime account for human rights abuses against its people tends to legitimize the regime by acknowledging that the regime is still the place to seek redress.

(1) *Saving individuals, not dismantling institutions:*

Human rights organizations tend to save individuals, caught within an institution of state terrorism, rather than dismantling the institution itself. The claim is admittedly a broad generalization and does not indicate whether it is because the human rights movement has not developed enough international political clout or because the movement does not aim directly at dismantling institutions of state terrorism. But, after all, in what country during, say, the last fifteen years has international human rights pressure brought about the dismantling of a large-scale, well-developed apparatus of state terrorism?

Surely not in Argentina.[3] The full weight of Western human rights machinery was brought against its military regime, including significant sanctions by the Carter administration.[4] Yet the cessation of state terrorism in Argentina was largely the result of eliminating — at frightful human cost — the guerrillas who supposedly had been threatening the regime, followed by subsequent economic disaster, capped off by the Falklands-Malvinas debacle, which brought down the military government. Human rights pressure had little to do with this.[5] The marching each week by the mothers of the *'desaparecidos'* caused much hand-wringing in Western democracies, but that start-

elaborated with Richard Anderson following his return to the United States. The emphasis of this article is on non-governmental human rights organizations.

3. For general descriptions of state terrorism in Argentina, see Robert Cox, "Total Terrorism: Argentina 1969-1979," *Terrorism, Legitimacy, and Power,* ed. M. Crenshaw, (1983 Wesleyan U.P., Middletown Conn.); International Commission of Jurists, "The Present State of Emergency in Argentina," *States of Emergency,* (Geneva 1983).

4. See *The New York Times,* Sept. 7, 1977 , p. 117 for a discussion of Carter's decision to cut off arms sales, curb loans and credits because of Argentina's human rights record in the mid-seventies.

5. See Juan E. Corradi, "Terror in Argentina," *Telos* No. 54, (Winter 1982-83).

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ed, for the most part, only after the end of large-scale terror, and was more a plea for *post-hoc* justice than a demand for the end of on-going terror. Moreover, even today the pressure of Argentine human rights groups on the Alfonsin government is insufficient to occasion a truly top-to-bottom human rights housecleaning within the Argentine military.

The repressive apparatus of the Shah of Iran continued practically unabated right up until the moment he fled the country. It was not the human rights movement per se that ended that particular wave of Iranian state terrorism so much as *revolution* stemming from a profusion of causes, in which Western liberal human rights ideology was only one, and that only among a certain Westernized segment of the population. Idi Amin fell because Nyere's Tanzania, disregarding the fundamental canon of international liberalism — territorial sovereignty — invaded Uganda and chased him out. And Pol Pot might well have slaughtered all the people of Cambodia, rather than just a third to half, had Vietnam not intervened. But in neither of these admittedly extreme cases did international human rights mechanisms have a noticeable impact. In South Africa, the regime occasionally bows to the pressures of human rights organizations and investigates (without substantial result) how a particular prisoner died in police custody, while the larger process of apartheid remains unchanged.

And El Salvador? It is hard to imagine anyone outside the Salvadoran High Command or the U.S. State Department who would argue that the insitutions of state terrorism have been dismantled. Since Duarte's election as president in 1984, the number of political murders inside the capital city has been reduced, but the indiscriminate slaughter of peasants by aerial bombardment or infantry massacre has been as bad as ever or worse. The exact numbers of those deaths in the countryside are harder to calculate than city death squad killings, because whole sectors of the provinces are inaccessible to human rights workers.[6] This gives apologists for the Salvadoran military — i.e., the Duarte government — room to claim that the institutions of repression have been controlled, if not dismantled.[7] But human rights organizations do not make such claims.

Of course, we are not arguing that the human rights movement has not tried to force dismantling institutions of state terrorism. Far from it. Just because the movement has not developed enough political power to change whole systems of terror does not mean that the only concern of the human rights movement is to save individuals. On the contrary, Amnesty International and Americas Watch, for example, frequently condemn whole national institutions in their reports.[8] It is also true that pressing the claims of individuals is a way of challenging the system — although, as we shall later see, it simultaneously tends to confirm the system.

6. See Americas Watch and Lawyers Committee for International Human Rights, *Free Fire: A Report on Human Rights in El Salvador,* (August 1984), 5th Supplement to the 1982 Americas Watch-ACLU *Report on Human Rights in El Salvador,* for discussion of how the slaughter has moved to the countryside and away from the city of San Salvador.

7. For example, Thomas Enders, Asst. Secretary of State of Interamerican Affairs, testified before Congress that the level of non-combat violence had been reduced by one-half in 1981 — an incredible claim, but some version of it is repeated every few months by the Reagan Administration. See Enders testimony in *The Presidential Certification.* See also Duarte's illuminating interview in *Playboy,* (November 1984), in which he states that "Compare this level of crime in El Salvador [including all political violence] with that of any other country in the world and you'll see that it is relatively low." pp. 71-72.

8. For example, Amnesty International's *Torture in the Eighties* (Amnesty International Publications, London, 1984, p. 1-17) is a detailed analysis and denunciation of torture as an *institution.*

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Despite these qualifications, the successes of the human rights movement have been most pronounced in individual cases. The reason for that is owing largely to the way in which human rights are conceived of as individual rights, whose violation is illegal, not just because human rights organizations have been too weak to effect more systematic changes. But the idea of human rights abuses as violations of law carries us into the second thesis.

(2) *Human rights abuses as violations of law:*

In El Salvador, as in other places of massive human rights abuse, human rights workers always seem to be in the position of following security forces from atrocity to atrocity, never being able to take proscriptive action and always having to denounce abuses after the fact. What, concretely, do human rights workers in El Salvador do from day to day? They go out into the city of San Salvador and count the bodies for the week, try to identify them and establish a cause of death. Where possible, workers go out to the countryside, especially following an army sweep of the area, and attempt to collect eyewitness testimony of serial bombardments and infantry atrocities against villages; they collect the orphans and take them to the refugee camps. At Tutela Legal, the human rights office of the Salvadoran Archdiocese, the staff divides the testimony into a set of statistics for the month. These reports are then released to the public, the international press, and the Salvadoran government.

Compiling statistics is not all that Salvadoran human rights workers do. They also attempt to locate persons who have disappeared or have been formally arrested by the government. The legal staff goes before the courts and military agencies in efforts to secure the release of prisoners, to press writs of habeas corpus, and to try through publicity to make it more difficult for the security forces to torture or murder a prisoner in secret. The risk these workers run is considerable, especially when they are Salvadoran nationals.

Taking technical legal pleas before tribunals and compiling statistics would seem — absent the personal risk — a rather prosaic way to pursue human rights in a country where at the very minimum 50,000 people have died in political violence during the past four years — nearly all of it attributable to the government security forces working in concert with the paramilitary right wing.[9] It is done this way, at one level, because it is the only possible way. Anything more than this would result in the shutting down of Tutela Legal and the possible assassination of its leadership, just as the Archbishop himself was shot to death.[10]

The human rights movement, in its most important *systematic* achievement to date, has succeeded in making human rights an undeniable part of the debate over the legitimacy of a government that does no more than pay lip service to human rights ideals.

At another level, however, this lip sevice reflects the human rights movement's conception of itself, and not just what regimes have succeeded in confining it to. The mod-

9. Americas Watch and the ACLU jointly concluded in their 1982 *Report on Human Rights in El Salvador* that "the government (of El Salvador) is in control of its security forces — that in fact, for all practical purposes, the security forces are the real government — and that torture and murder are instruments of policy." (p. 132) Conclusions of later Supplements to that *Report* have only reinforced this view about who is responsible for the political deaths in El Salvador, especially as it becomes clear how many non-combatants are dying in deliberately indiscriminate military sweeps and bombing attacks.

10. Monsignor Romero was killed during Mass in March 1981 after delivering a homily urging army soldiers not to fire on unarmed civilians; considerable evidence indicates that the killing was authorized by the Salvadoran High Command.

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ern conception of human rights essentially began with the Nuremberg trials, where minimal respect for human rights was defined as a matter of international legality — a legal obligation of governments.[11] In this sense the protection of human rights is incumbent on the government in power. What the human rights movement attempts to do is regulate those governments on the model of legality. But liberal legality presumes that punishment follows on a crime. The human rights movement has no substantive power to impose punishment on governments in power; nonetheless it sticks closely to the legal model in the way it uses legal principles to take evidence and testimony, to apply international legal instruments to arrive at a judgment, and especially to pronounce culpability. The result is that human rights workers wind up as unwilling, ad hoc camp followers of armies and government security forces.

The legal model, which serves to establish the scrupulous disinterestedness of human rights workers, also provides the regime in El Salvador and the U.S. Embassy with an easy method of undercutting the credibility of human rights documentation. During the last two years, the U.S. Embassy in El Salvador and the U.S. State Department, under the tutelage of the Undersecretary of State for Human Rights, Elliott Abrams, have systematically refused to acknowledge abuses by the government in El Salvador unless backed by courtroom levels of proof.[12] They claim that unless that standard can be met, it is unfair to claim that the Salvadoran government has not met international legal standards of human rights. Simultaneously the Salvadoran government makes it nearly impossible for human rights workers to verify incidents, especially where many people are reported massacred at the hands of the military.[13] Finally, the U.S. State Department routinely releases specious reports claiming improvement in human rights in El Salvador.[14] In this fashion the very scrupulousness of the legal model can be exploited by those supporting human rights abuse.

More importantly, the legalistic conception of human rights assumes that no matter how widespread and systematic the abuses of human rights, they are still *deviations*

11. The Nuremberg Tribunal was a military proceeding — a court-martial — with judges, at least in the American jurisprudence, appointed by the commander-in-chief of the armed forces. The Charter of the Tribunal specified that crimes against humanity committed prior to the outbreak of war should still be considered for punishment; the Tribunal, however, inexplicably ignored those Charter provisions and considered only those crimes committed once war had broken out. However, crimes against humanity included crimes against German nationals and not just nationals of occupied or Allied countries, thus introducing a new principle of culpability into the laws of war. See Finch, "The Nuremberg Trial and International Law," *American Journal of International Law,* vol. 41, 1947, p. 20; Wright, "The Law of the Nuremberg Trial" in the same volume. Subsequent United Nations documents have dropped any connection between crimes against humanity and the laws of war in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other instruments.

12. For Americas Watch' account of this State Department procedure, see *U.S. Reporting on Human Rights in El Salvador: Methodology at Odds With Knowledge* (June 1982); *Protection of the Weak and Unarmed: The Dispute Over Counting Human Rights Violations in El Salvador* (Feb. 1984). For the U.S. State Dept. view, see answers given to questions by Rep. Michael Barnes, Chairman of the Western Hemisphere Subcommittee of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, provided by the State Dept., Aug. 2, 1984, and reprinted in *Free Fire,* the Americas Watch 5th Supplement to the *Report.*

13. Ken Anderson, for example, was stopped by the Salvadoran military, put on a jeep, and returned to San Salvador in August 1984 while trying to reach the site of a late July infantry massacre of 60 civilians (*Boston Globe,* Sept. 9, 1984, at 1, col. 5); he was carrying a press pass, O.A.S. papers, and a letter from the Salvadoran government's own human rights commission.

14. These reports frequently come out accompanying the Presidential Certification of human rights improvement in El Salvador; for an analysis of their inadequacy, see Horton and Sellier, "The Utility of Presidential Certification of Compliance with United States Human Rights Policy: The Case of El Salvador," 1982 *Wisconsin Law Review,* p. 825.

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from the legal norm and are not the norm itself. It is this feature that makes the model a legalistic one in the first place, but in many ways it is a strange idea, more the assertion of an article of liberal faith than the blunt description of social reality.[15]

To be sure, legal norms are not to be confused with behavioral norms, which may be — and in the most important situations for the rule of law, always are — at flagrant variance to the law. That is correct, but it misses the point. The real problem here is not the *denial of* the legal norm, which says that human rights exist and should not be violated, but instead what shall serve as the *ground for* the norm. The social reality of El Salvador surely cannot serve. The criticism of the legalistic paradigm does not deny the existence of the legal norm but instead denies that the social reality of El Salvador can ground human rights — in the way that the peaceful social world of, say, Canada or Sweden probably can help ground the existence of human rights in those societies. So the question remains, what *can* serve? Indeed, not even critics of the legalist paradigm claim that behavioral, social reality *suffices* to ground human rights norms. Rather, they assert that in the absence of corroboration provided by the social context, the task of justifying the existence and application of these norms simply becomes that much harder. Finally, the critics do not claim that the failure to corroborate human rights norms with social reality is a general feature of all societies. It is instead a narrow worry about specific circumstances in which massive human rights violations — aerial bombardment and slaughter by the infantry, in the case of El Salvador[16] — is the rule of life for many people.

The human rights movement most naturally reaches to the social realities and norms of *other* societies in the international community to provide the ground, or at least the corroboration, of human rights norms. Let the peaceable kingdoms of Canada and Sweden provide the example of human rights norms and give meaning to the application of those norms to El Salvador. But the ultimate validity of this move depends on the outcome of the debate between those who claim universal application of human rights against the cultural and moral relativists who deny that human rights norms can be generalized across the human community.[17] Much has been written on this debate and we will not enter it here.

Our purpose is not to settle the relativist debate, but instead just to point out a conceptual feature of the human rights movement: rightly or wrongly, consistently or

15. In the countryside of El Salvador, for example, repression *is* the norm, terror *is* the norm. A peasant farmer from Suchitoto describes how the infantry came to his village in July 1984 and, as he lay hidden, massacred the inhabitants, dousing his child with gasoline and burning him alive. A deviation from the norm? No, unfortunately just the Atlacatl Battalion — the crack, U.S.-trained unit (which, by the way, received special lectures on rights of non-combatants so that U.S. State Department could point to U.S. military aid as a source of improved human rights performance) — retaliating against peasants for an ambush by the guerrillas at Cerron Grande the month before. After so many years and so many atrocities, what is the basis for saying that there is *any* norm applicable to El Salvador such that abuses of human rights will count as deviations from it?

16. The Suchitoto atrocity is particularly well-documented. See *The Boston Globe*, Sept. 9, 1984, at 1, col. 5. Testimony of survivors and photographs of bodies are on file at Americas Watch. A proposal to limit military aid until responsible parties are punished is found in Anderson, "Action Specific Human Rights Legislation for El Salvador," *Harvard Journal on Legislation,* vol. 22, No. 1, Winter 1985.

17. A recent defense of moral relativism based on cultural relativism can be found in Wang, *Moral Relativism* (1984). Moral relativism, which goes practically unquestioned among political scientists, sociologists, and anthropologists, is currently in serious decline in analytic moral philosophy, following the attacks by Philippa Foot and others. See Foot's remarkable essays in *Virtues and Vices.*

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inconsistently, it does hold to a legalist model of human rights that asserts that abuses, no matter how widespread and massive, are still *violations* of a legal norm. But whether the appeal to the behaviors of other societies is included as part of a moral ground or a legal ground or something else, the peaceful example of other societies cannot be called part of the social reality of a country like El Salvador, which is too grim for such examples to have any meaning.

(3) *Rational self-interest and human rights abuse:*

If it were possible to show how following human rights norms would be in the rational self-interest of a regime, then the task of human rights workers would not be the attempt to impose unwanted standards of behavior on a recalcitrant regime, but rather the task of showing a regime how it was making a *mistake* about what its interests are and how best to look out for them. Human rights, perhaps, would become a much more optimistic endeavor, and offending regimes could be regarded less as erring in their duties than as erring in understanding their interests.

There is, however, another reason for considering the question of rational self-interest. Conversations with human rights workers have convinced us that embedded deep in the ideology of the movement are several beliefs about rationality and self-interest. These beliefs are important because, if true, or even if only regarded as true by those in the human rights movement, they could affect how human rights work is done. The first belief is that it is irrational for a regime to violate human rights massively and deliberately because to act rationally means, somehow, to act at a minimum moral level,[18] which, in this view, entails respect for human rights. The second belief is that a regime somehow acts irrationally when it massively violates human rights because such violations undermine the legitimacy that derives from the state's role as protector of its people. Yet "people" is an abstract concept, and acting in its interests, or on its behalf, never precludes its slaughter to make way for a re-educated, purified people of the future. Third, there is the belief that massive human rights violation is irrational because no one could *will* the organization of society along lines of widespread and largely unpredictable murder. But this does not take account of the fact that frequently state terrorism is justified as a short-term exigency, invoked to deal with an implacable foe, which, however, never seems to go away.

But practical problems arise for arguing that massive human rights abuse is irrational when one points to the realities of El Salvador or Guatemala[19] — regimes where large scale human rights abuse, over the years, has paid off well for the ruling classes. In the face of such examples it becomes harder and harder to stick by the claim that such regimes are acting irrationally, unless one simply admits to two separate usages of "rational," one a morally laden, evaluative, Kantian usage, and the other a description of effective means to ends.

Confusion of these two usages runs deep in the human rights movement. The desire to believe that the enemy, the offending regime, is not just evil but crazy, is a psychological defense against seeing the enemy as overwhelming, implacable, calculating, and acting in its best interest.[20] The source of this belief perhaps harks back to

18. This is, arguably, Rawls' position in *A Theory of Justice* (1971, Harvard University Press).

19. For an analysis of the rationality of the Guatemalan terror, see Gabriel Aguilera Peralta, Jorge Romero Imery, et al., *Dialectica del terror en Guatemala,* (San Jose Costa Rica, EDUCA Press, 1981).

20. There is a tendency within contemporary political science to characterize state terrorism as irrational *in some sense.* Unfortunately that sense is rarely specified. See Lovas and Anderson, "Friendly Repression in Hungary," *Telos,* No. 54, (Winter 1982-83), for a discussion of theorists of state terrorism who adopt the irrationality thesis.

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the root inspiration for modern human rights law — the Nazis. Early postwar writers such as Camus persisted in characterizing the Nazis as gangster-criminals with petty criminal minds who, by accident of history, had seized the levers of the modern state.[21] Indeed, Camus took the Nazis as the paradigm of *irrational* state terror — it is even the title of his chapter on the Nazis — and that image of the irrational, small-minded criminal set loose in the control room of a machine of state beyond his comprehension has remained with us to this day. Murray Bernays, for example, was one of the first to urge the Allies to try war criminals, and in his view the problem was to expose the "bestiality" of the Nazis. "They must be tried not alone for their specific aims," Bernays claimed, "but for the bestiality from which these crimes sprang."[22]

This vision of the Nazis has recently been challenged,[23] but the initial conceptions of gangsterism and irrationality have haunted the human rights movement. The psychological desire to downscale the coherence and sanity of human rights *criminals* is a powerful one. Why? First, perhaps, because we fear to imagine the world as a place where massive state terror and genocide are perfectly reasonable means to certain ends. Second, perhaps, because by denying the world's greatest criminals sanity and coherence, we isolate ourselves from them — we deny that they have anything to do with us. This is comforting, but no more than that. To confront the evil of the Nazis or even the much less well-organized evil of the Salvadoran military, one must confront the coherence of the plan.

The human rights movement has inherited this impoverished vocabulary of irrationality as part of the legalistic model derived from Nuremberg and the postwar commentators. Only in more recent years has the movement begun to take account, in human rights reporting, of the systematic abuse of human rights by regimes using it as a primary, long-term means of social control. One of the best current examples of such analysis comes from the human rights literature on El Salvador — the first ACLU-Americas Watch *Report on Human Rights in El Salvador,* published in 1982. This report takes account of the history of the Salvadoran terror and its links to socio-economic conditions rationalizing the terror. But this kind of analysis, while giving a more accurate picture of state terrorism, is also more open to attack because it departs from the unvarnished facts of individual cases. Each conclusion about the systematic nature of the terror requires an inference from the individual cases, permitting room for the inference and its conclusion to be rejected, and along with those the individual atrocities as well. The analysis of systems of terror in a certain sense means transcending the legalist model altogether, and this makes it useless for the purposes of advocating human rights. Participation in legal advocacy, after all, means working within the legal system however it may be constituted.

So the human rights movement has embedded in it a set of complex beliefs about the irrationality of massive human rights abuse. But apart from this, it could still be argued that as a matter of empirical fact that massive abuse of human rights is not a

21. Albert Camus, *The Rebel,* (Vintage Books NY, 1959).

22. See *Bernays Papers,* Box 1, June 10, 1945. See further Robert Conot, *Justice at Nuremberg,* (Harper and Row, 1983), which engages the gangster image at p. 146. ". . . the resemblance of the accused to an array of Mafia Chieftans." See also Bradley Smith, *The Road to Nuremberg,* (1981, Basic Books), for an account of the ideology which motivated the Tribunal and the Indictment against the Nazis. The gangster-criminal *small-minded* image is reinforced again in Robert Jackson, the American prosecutor at Nuremberg, in his opening statement in *The Nuremberg Case,* (Cooper Square Publ. NY, 1971).

23. See Bernard-Henri Levy, *The Testament of God,* (Harper & Row, 1980), p. 12-16, and especially the accompanying notes.

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rational policy for a regime interested in maintaining power and stability. We think the case of El Salvador refutes this claim, however.

The regime in El Salvador is betting — Duarte no less than the military high command — that it will win the struggle against the FMLN if it employs massive repression against the Salvadoran population, especially in the countryside which provides the infrastructure for the guerrillas. The regime's U.S. military advisers have a different view: officially the United States condemns the use of military force against noncombatants as a means of undercutting civilian support for the insurgents and maintains that bloody attacks on civilian populations long after the actual guerrillas have fled embattled zones are strategically ineffective.[24] The official U.S. counterinsurgency strategy is to train small, fast units of "hunter-seeker" patrols capable of finding and engaging the guerrillas on their own turf, but with the massive airpower backup that would give the advantage to the government forces.[25] The *unofficial,* de facto U.S. strategy, however, is that "hunter-seeker" tactics are insufficient and what is needed to win the war is a combination of hunter-seeker tactics with the abusive sweeps against the civilian population.[26] The U.S. military advisers know perfectly well that the Salvadoran military is not going to give up the sweep strategy of terror, hence it can officially deplore it and urge use of the hunter-seeker strategy. The result is a two-pronged attack on the FMLN that may well prove effective, though at extraordinary cost in civilian lives.

One version of the empirical "irrationality" claim suggests that because the regime might *lose,* it is less rational for it to use the means of massive state terrorism than to seek a compromise political solution. But in El Salvador the clinching response, at this time, is that the Reagan policy makes the possibility of losing virtually nil, no matter how incompetent the Salvadoran military may be. In a more general analysis, regimes could be said to act more rationally if they refrained from tactics that make the struggle an all or nothing outcome. But this conclusion depends, among other things, on a given regime's ability to accept some sort of political compromise as well as the belief that it does have a significant chance of losing. Neither of these conditions is much in evidence in the strategies of the Salvadoran High Command, nor are they evident in the thinking of many other repressive regimes. The Salvadoran oligarchy, which long ago co-opted the Salvadoran military as its own, assumes correctly that social compromise is merely the beginning of the end for it.

The second version says that the regime ignores its own long-term stability by abusing human rights. According to this argument, human rights abuses are a foolishly short-sighted strategy, because while the short-term threat may be averted, over the longer run so many people will have been alienated from the regime that stability is undercut.

But this argument also depends on the assumptions that compromises are conceivable for the regime and that the regime has a possibility of losing. Furthermore, the more defined the opposition — as in an opposition army in a civil war — the less believable is the threat that a regime will undercut its long-term stability by abusing human rights, since the regime can point to a concrete body of rebels to annihilate following which state terrorism, supposedly, will cease. The appeal to long-term

24. See the discussion of U.S. counterinsurgency policy and the laws of war in Appendix A to *Free Fire, op. cit.,* p. 139-140.

25. As stated to Ken Anderson in an interview with Vittorio Brod, Political Secretary of the U.S. Embassy in San Salvador, August 16, 1984.

26. As stated to Ken Anderson, August 16, 1984, by a U.S. military trainer in El Salvador who declined to be identified.

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interests turns out to be not very compelling, assuming as it does that regimes have the luxury of taking the long term into account.[27]

There is a practical point in this discussion of rational self-interest and terror. How closely human rights workers work with an offending government depends, in part, on how susceptible they think a government will be to persuasion about its self-interest. The more a human rights organization believes it can show a government the error of its prudential calculations, the more time the organization will spend "working with" the government to "improve" its procedures for, say, handling prisoners or keeping files on who is in custody or "acceptable" guidelines for aerial bombardments. On the other hand, the more abuse of human rights is seen as in the interests of the regime, the less inclined one will be to believe government promises of "improvements" and the more time one will spend organizing potential victims of the government. But once human rights organizations depart from the "camp follower" role, they place themselves in direct opposition to the government. One example of human rights workers on the "fringe" of human rights work and active opposition would be certain priests and nuns working in the isolated countryside of El Salvador: although they speak the language of reformist human rights, their sympathies are clearly with the guerrillas.

But the point here is that the massive violation of human rights is probably in the best interests of many regimes. In many cases, given the short-term crises, it is an *irresistible* strategy, whether it works or not. Insofar as the human rights movement does not understand that fundamental, rational irresistibility, it will underestimate the enormity of its task and the inadequacy of its tools.

(4) *Legal discourse and political realities:*

Might legality provide a ground for human rights that rational self-interest apparently cannot? We are concerned less with the possibility that the concept of law can serve to ground human rights norms than making two narrow observations about the strange rhetorical *distance* of the legal discourse about human rights from morality, on the one hand, and social reality, on the other.

Human rights norms, in their legal version of constitutional texts or international instruments, have been assented to by most countries, including El Salvador.[28] Human rights norms thereby gain the virtue of appearing to by agreed-to standards of conduct, a voluntary contract, rather than a set of moral judgments imposed from outside the society by international denunciation. Never mind that the ratification of the international human rights documents was a mere formality in so many cases, or that it was done merely in order to gain economic concessions and military aid. However it happened, the regime has made itself a prisoner of its own legalist rhetoric. Its own rhetoric includes legalist language about human rights.

Yet, insofar as moral considerations are deliberately left out of the legal discourse about human rights, the legal discourse becomes distanced from the concerns that got it going in the first place. After all, it's not by virtue of El Salvador having *agreed* to

27. The lesson for repressive regimes, courtesy of Guatemala, is that the best policy may be the heaviest possible abuse at the earliest signs of social dissatisfaction, let alone insurrection. The Salvadoran right has already learned this lesson as a matter of theory; a junior officer serving in the countryside near Chalatenago remarked, "In Guatemala they caught the cancer before it spread, here in the El Salvador we waited too long. Now we will still cut away the disease, but it is like chopping off your arms and legs to save your head." (Conversation with Ken Anderson, August 1984).

28. See Lawyers Committee for International Human Rights, *A Report on the Investigation into the Killing of Four American Churchwomen in El Salvador* (1981); the trial held in 1984 is reported in *N.Y. Times,* May 25, 1984 at All, col. 2.

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human rights norms that anyone appeals to them — surely it is by virtue of the acts they proscribe being morally wrong that anybody bothers to cite them. Human rights norms are appealed to because we want to forbid murder, torture, and the like, and not because El Salvador or any other country would agree to abide the norm. But in order to avoid the politically charged debates over morality and relativism and the imposition of unassented-to values, human rights discourse tends to stick within the parameters of legal discourse.[29] It is safer and more politic, but is also the first alienation of legal discourse about human rights from its actual subject matter. To put it another, cruder way, a good deal of the legal discourse about human rights in El Salvador can be boiled down to this: "Tens of thousands of people have been murdered by the Salvadoran government security forces in the past four years — and guess what, it was all *unconstitutional*!"

There is a second way in which legal discourse is alienated, this one going to the alienation of the legalist model from the social and political realities of El Salvador. Consider the contrasts in attempting to advocate human rights cases in the Salvadoran legal system today.

Human rights lawyers in El Salvador go before the civilian courts seeking to find prisoners and persons who have disappeared. They file many pages of court documents, asserting first that the person actually existed and second that the government had something to do with his or her disappearance. The civilian courts blandly deny jurisdiction and refer the petitioners to the military. The language of the pleas takes the same dry, pointedly civilized tone as a civil suit for possession of a cow. Relevant constitutional sections are cited and legal conclusions are drawn: my client should be released from months of captivity because no charges have been filed, the whereabouts of my client should be disclosed, my client should not have been tortured on the genitals, the body of my client should be produced. The procedural language takes no account of the ten thousand similarly situated individuals who died in the previous year of political violence in El Salvador. The legal language does just what it is supposed to do in a liberal state — it takes no account of politics at all.

Yet, everyone knows that this is nothing but politics. Law and justice count for nothing in this game, and the political consequences lying just barely concealed beneath the legal rhetoric are uppermost in the mind of each lawyer, civilian judge, military official, and prisoner. The legal language, especially the procedural language, is filled with formulas about jurisdiction, competence, states of emergency, suspension of constitutional guarantees, and thus the legal discourse floats further and further away from the bitter realities of civil war and state terrorism in El Salvador. There has been one trial of any significance in El Salvador during the past four years — the trial of low-level National Guardsmen for the brutal rape-murders of four American churchwomen in 1980. That trial and the conviction that followed were hailed by human rights organizations as a first step forward toward legal guarantees of human rights in El Salvador, and of course they are right, considering that it was the first time that members of the Salvadoran armed forces had been convicted of a killing with political overtones. On the other hand, that trial was bought and paid for by Salvador's imperial hegemon, the United States, which temporarily re-established the atrophied legal institutions, conducted the investigation, provided security, and threatened to cut off

29. A close reading of most of Americas Watch and Amnesty International reports for the last ten years showed that, unsurprisingly, both organizations carefully avoid such inferences. Both organizations would readily agree that endorsing revolution or insurrection is outside their mandates.

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significant chunks of military aid until results were obtained. The message of the trial, read a certain way, was that killing Salvadorans was acceptable but killing Americans was not; the Reagan administration yielded the convictions of four enlisted men for permission to ship more and more military aid to El Salvador. Hence the very form of legality built around individual cases is unable to piece together what everyone is most aware of — that abuse of human rights forms a system of rational state terrorism.

(5) *The refusal to declare governments illegitimate:*

The theses elaborated thus far have considered the difficulties of applying the legalist model of human rights to situations of massive violations. We now turn to two ways in which the liberal legalist model of human rights contributes to the *legitimacy* of abusing regimes. The first way is quite straightforward: the major human rights organizations do not declare regimes illegitimate however massive their violations of human rights.[30] This is just a fancy way of saying that Amnesty International and such organizations do not endorse revolutions. But why not?

The first reason is a practical one. If human rights organizations permitted themselves the option of declaring a particular government so wildly abusive of human rights that it did not deserve to exist, regimes the world over would rapidly refuse human rights work of any sort within their countries. The result might be the death of many individuals who could otherwise have been saved with a less principled but more flexible stand.

A second reason lies in the special nature of legal advocacy. As we have earlier discussed, the advocacy role involves taking the legal system as it stands and attempting to accomplish such good as can be done within the confines of the system. Moreover, the usual nature of liberal legal systems emphasizes individuals, not systems. The lawyer with a client in an El Salvador military prison will probably not do very well in freeing that prisoner if he or she engages in a polemic against the system; the best strategy for the lawyer is to try and show why the prisoner should not have come under the reach of whatever military or emergency presidential decree is in force or how the police made a mistake or how in some way *this* individual should go free. But even if the tribunal lets this individual go, there is a structural effect, to which we shortly turn, which tends to confirm the power and legitimacy of the regime in enforcing such decrees in the first place.

Yet, even in the "objective reporting" role human rights organizations stop short of declaring regimes illegitimate. This is not in the least surprising, since the ostensible function of human rights reports is to give an "objective" presentation of the facts of a particular country or practice, with the "evaluative" presentation limited to ways in which a regime's practices might violate international law. And what are the relevant international laws? There are two sorts, both structurally part of contemporary *international* liberalism, and each in fundamental opposition to the other.

The first is the body of international human rights norms that largely began with the Nazis and Nuremberg, where the international community asserted a right to punish a regime not only for its conduct toward other nations, but for its conduct toward its own people. This new principle of international liberalism flies directly in the teeth of the second body of international law, which asserts the non-interference of one state with another and territorial sovereignty. Human rights organizations appeal to the first

30. Estimated at hundreds each year by Dr. Benjamin Cestoni, the director of the Salvadoran government's official Human Rights Commission, in an interview with Ken Anderson August 15, 1984.

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body, but rapidly run up against the countervailing weight of the second. Moreover, the major human rights organizations — Amnesty International in particular — have a special role in the international community, that of giving objective, unbiased, *believable* reports of human rights conditions, and that reputation would be compromised by drawing conclusions about legitimacy that could not be squared with the full body of international law. The compromise position is that human rights organizations stop short of calling regimes illegitimate, and by doing so preserve their place in the discourse of international liberalism.

(6) *Legitimacy and the seat of redress:*

The general effect of issuing denunciations of a regime's practices is undoubtedly to undercut the regime's legitimacy in the eyes of the international community and the regime's own people, to the extent that the people hear the denunciation. Observance of internationally recognized human rights has indeed entered the canons by which the legitimacy of a government is judged. This is true even though nothing be done by means of direct foreign intervention against a particular government. Even a consensus that a government is illegitimate rarely results in intervention.

The place of human rights in establishing legitimacy is incontrovertible whether one views legitimacy as an irreducible *moral* concept describing the *right* to rule or whether one views legitimacy as just a question of actual political power. For even in the latter case, international approval — most readily demonstrated by international commerce, aid, and arms — is an important part of a regime's ability to maintain the political power that, in this latter view, constitutes legitimacy. This does not mean that human rights is the only or even determining factor in establishing international legitimacy, but in contemporary international liberalism it is certainly one factor.

On the other hand, that general tendency should not blind us to an important, if more subtle, counter-tendency in which the demand for a human rights accounting in itself lends legitimacy to the offending regime. Consider El Salvador and the legions of human rights activists who pass through the country each year. The visitors from abroad are frequently received by the government commission on human rights — the human rights organizations do not want to compromise their "objectivity" by refusing to hear the government version of things and besides, they can do much concrete good by influencing the government, especially on behalf of particular individual prisoners. The Salvadoran government, for its part, is well aware that a real part of its international legitimacy is at stake in how it responds to human rights enquiries, even when they come from nongovernmental bodies. Hence the government human rights commission, far from concealing the fact that human rights organizations were making enquiries, carefully writes up the visit for its newsletter, to show how it is "working with" the international community to improve the human rights record of the government.

And it is true that the Salvadoran human rights commission, staffed with energetic young assistants from the local university, is not a mere apologist for the regime. It works *very hard* — but ineffectually because, being of the regime, it is ideologically wedded to the view that improving human rights in El Salvador is a matter of the enforcement of laws in individual situations, rather than systematic changes which would inevitably question the legitimacy of a military regime headed by a puppet civilian president.

The general lesson is that, whether human rights workers cozy up to an official government commission or deal at arms-length with a military tribunal, as a matter of fact the human rights movement still acknowledges that the regime remains the place

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to seek redress. We are not criticizing human rights organizations for approaching regimes; far from it. But the effect of such an approach must also be recognized. If it is thought that this concession is just an academic point, it is worth recalling that some of the worst-offending regimes still seek this form of legitimization. El Salvador actively seeks it; Chile and South Africa, for example, acquiesce in it as the one off-setting benefit of human rights enquiry. It is a legitimacy that many human rights workers would prefer not to grant to the most abusive regimes, but which is given, all the same.

*Conclusions:*

We began with the question of whether the legalist model of human rights is adequate or even appropriate in cases of massive, sustained abuses of human rights. Should the ways of talking about human rights abuse be the same in peaceful Canada as in El Salvador? And if they are not, what then is left of international liberalism, with its claims to objective standards and the uniform rule of law? The argument thus far has produced a series of mostly theoretical constraints on human rights work that arise from the concept of legality and, to a lesser extent, from liberalism. This analysis does not offer to unify these conceptual limitations; instead by way of conclusion we set out several of the most compelling questions that a full-blown critique of international human rights would address.

First, are there any alternatives to the liberal model? In order to assert the values of human life found in human rights texts, is there some alternative structure to rights? For rights have a funny way of providing the fall-back position, even if everyone concedes that they are theoretically bankrupt. If we do not speak the language of rights, what *do* we speak? More narrowly, are there alternatives to the *legalist* model of *enforcement* of human rights? Perhaps the notion of a right is not so bound up with the enforcement mechanism of legality — especially the already weakened notion of legal enforcement in the *international* sphere — that no other kind of enforcement structure could be envisaged instead.

These are theoretical issues, far removed from the day to day of human rights work. The practical point of view, from the field, is that even the most solidly grounded defense of human rights turns out to have, in the places where human rights work is most important, only a weak toehold. Any attempt to extend the range of human rights may well backfire, losing ground the debate had already gained. Any attempt to relinquish the language of rights will cause the discourse about human rights to lose its ground in the only tradition it has — liberalism. The enterprise of going beyond liberalism and its formal freedoms is, in sheer practical terms, a risky one. And this is why the most urgent question for the human rights movement, at a simultaneously theoretical and practical level, is whether transcending the conceptual limitations of liberalism and legality means giving up the core vision of human rights and the limited practical good it has achieved.

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# BUREAUCRACY AND CULTURE: A CONFERENCE REPORT

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The "Fourth International Conference on the Comparative, Historical and Critical Analysis of Bureaucracy" was held in Vancouver, B.C., September 2-6, 1985. Focusing on the relations between "Bureaucracy and Culture," the conference program promised to have sections on intellectuals, the labor movement, prisons, mass culture, the new class, state terrorism, etc. As is usually the case in even the best organized conferences, however, most speakers paid only lip service to their assigned theme and chose to discuss instead whatever they happened to be working on. The predictable result, of course, was that when these various Leibnizian monads were forced by the collective discussion to focus on the issues at hand, they simply fell back on recycling well-worn political stances to confront specific questions with automatic easy answers. Hence, from the very first day, the conference evolved into a predictable internal debate within the liberal-left intelligensia. To the extent that, unlike the three earlier conferences on bureaucracy, this time the participants included three *Telos* editors, the more interesting debates gradually turned into a clash between the *Telos* position and the traditional left analysis.

Richard Wolin provided the opening address and then placed the question of critical theory's analysis of bureaucracy at the top of the agenda. After all, aside from warmed-over accounts of Weber or panglossian technocratic apologies, the analysis of bureaucracies in the previous three conferences as well as in the predominant literature have been particularly sterile. There is always the promise of alternatives but, as Antonio commented about the first such conference,[1] very little ever emerges. Of course, critical theory itself has not been extremely successful in going much beyond Weber, yet it provides analytical tools for more meaningful accounts — especially in a situation where the framework within which the bureaucracy functions has been qualitatively altered. The "one-dimensional" or "totally administered" societies of Marcuse and Adorno were still predominant social tendencies at the time they were theorized and both authors had no chance of analyzing the post-1968 realities when those tendencies reached maturity. In such a situation, the disappearance of civil society as an autonomous sphere free of bureaucratic penetration, and the collapse of virtually all political opposition, qualitatively alters the nature and function of bureaucracy. From rationalizing agencies facilitating the universalization of the commodity form paving the way for more advanced modes of capitalist organization, bureaucracies became costly obstacles to further social development obstructing rather than facilitating social rationalization. Thus, Weber's theory of bureaucracy goes the way of his theory of religion: an interesting historical tool to make sense out of the trajectory of Western civilization, but carrying very little contemporary socio-political import.

Before critical theory can fully develop a theory of bureaucracy both adequate to the present and able to go beyond Habermas' reformulation (without any substantial improvement) of Weber, it is necessary to cleanse the amorphous heritage of "classi-

1. Robert Antonio, "Bureaucratic Approaches to the Bureaucracy: A Conference Report," in *Telos,* 57 (Fall 1983), pp. 177-185.



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cal" critical theory (classical as in "classical Coke"). This is why Wolin's opening address dealing with "Benjamin and Critical Theory" sought to identify the parallels between the thought of Benjamin and Adorno on epistemology and philosophy of history. He suggested that the influence of Benjamin on "classical" critical theory must be recognized and criticized for its excessive emphasis on teleology. The problem with the historico-philosophical tack of both Benjamin and the Frankfurt School is that the linear theory of progress of Enlightenment philosophies of history is nominally rejected, yet then structurally endorsed with the signs reversed, i.e., the course of history is now perceived in terms of unilateral decline rather than incremental advances. As a result, the "dialectical" character of *Dialectic of Enlightenment* is lost to a new monological framework, in which the achievements of the modern age — aesthetic, ethical-juridical, scientific — are drastically undervalued. Concomitantly, a prehistoric, *mimetic* relation between humanity and nature is romantically overvalued. These biases lead to a systematic insensitivity to new historical tendencies, as well as valorizing irrationalist mode of cognition. The latter problem can be seen in the premium placed on aestheticist modes of cognition in the work of both Benjamin and Adorno — e.g., the emphasis on "dialectical images" and "constellations," and simultaneous devaluation of rational modes of cognition. Such tendencies cultimate in Adorno's *Aesthetic Theory,* in which aesthetics supplant rational thought as the supreme vehicle of knowledge. In the end, Wolin concluded that because of objective social developments toward a "totally administered world," the Frankfurt School critique of late capitalism must be retained — although divested of its teleological meta-theoretical framework.

After Wolin's presentation, a set of opening remarks were made by the conference organizers: Rolf Homann, Jerry Zaslove, and Wolf-Dieter Narr. Homann emphasized the theme of "culture vs. bureaucracy," implying that the two were diamentrically opposed, one life-giving, the other inherently reifying. Culture is intrinsically creative, Homann argued, and appealed to Bataille's emphasis on the heterogeneity of culture, which remains irreducible to the identitarian biases of bureaucratic thinking, a formulation all too reminiscent of the standard German reactionary opposition of "Kultur" and "Zivilisation."

Zaslove's statement appeared to emphasize similar themes, though relying on 19th century references. We are in danger of a loss of the image of culture, he claimed, due to the "bureaucratization of eros." The tragedy of culture is that the owl of Minerva has already departed: i.e., it is already too late. This led Zaslove to counterpose "culture vs. labor," in a manner reminiscent of Homann's dichotomy. Culture qua aesthetic cognition prevents the type of premature synthesis perpetrated by instrumental reason.

The problem in both analyses was that they failed to take into consideration the fact that culture itself is far from innocent in this dialectic but, especially in its modern administered forms, participates fully in the process of bureaucratization. In both its "high" and "low" variants, culture has been well integrated, even institutionalized, thus becoming disqualified as the "pure other" embraced by both vitalists and aesthetes.

Narr's remarks attempted to establish a framework for future discussion by updating the Weberian critique of bureaucracy through a more contemporary "theory of domination" indebted to a critical theory perspective. He tried to indicate the subtle ways in which a bureaucratic mentality manifests itself unreflectively in everyday modes of behavior and ended with an appeal to the importance of "exact fantasy" (Adorno) as a method of formulating non-bureaucratic alternatives. He cautiously

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suggested that the focus should be on "Culture *as* Bureaucracy" rather then "Culture vs. Bureaucracy." He pointed to the conference itself as a typical case in which the vindication of culture against bureaucracy is possible only within the bureaucratic logic of the knowledge industry, or the organization of academic production.

In the next session on "Intellectuals and Bureaucracy," John Doheny commented on the recently published autobiographies of what he took to be three representative intellectuals of the 50s: Burns, Woodcock and Howe (Irvy, not Gordy). The problem with his presentation was that, beside putting most of the audience to sleep by reading long quotations from the three autobiographies, his comments were meant to feed into a discussion of the role of intellectuals in the 50s by Russell Jacoby who, unfortunately, could not come. Consequently, they ended up, by Doheny's own honest admission, as a prelude to . . . nothing. Such a penetrating insight, however, did not prevent Doheny from wasting a full hour with a theme that turned out to have not even the remotest relation to anything else in the conference.

Fortunately, the next paper by Russell Berman on "The Routinization of Charismatic Modernism and the Problem of Post-Modernity," despite its ponderous Teutonic title, finally tackled the problem of bureaucratized culture. Because critics of bureaucracy often locate an oppositional potential in a cultural dimension, it was crucial to begin with an account of early twentieth-century modernist culture. Berman referred to material by Thomas Mann, Max Weber, and Henry Adams (he could have added the names of some of our famous Canadian authors that American "cultural imperialists" usually ignore). He argued that aesthetic modernism initially represented an oppositional culture contraposed to the Protestant ethic of nineteenth-century capitalism by elaborating programs of charismatic collectives. However, this charismatic modernism has undergone a process of routinization and recuperation. Not only did adversarial modernism end up quickly appropriated by the establishment cultural institutions of advanced capitalism, especially the universities; the aesthetic revolution of the historical avant-garde also contributed to the spread of a consumerist ethos of experiential immediacy and expressive sensibility. As Berman put it, the overpowering force that Adams found at Chartres, that D.H. Lawrence attributed to eroticism, is repeated in every discotheque and department store. Yet, unlike the neoconservatives who associate modern art with a hedonism allegedly inimical to modern capitalism, Berman claimed that modernist aesthetic culture helps undermine the acquisitive bourgeois individuality of laissez-faire capitalism in a manner that is fully compatible with the dynamics of capitalist modernization. Rather than threatening bureaucracy, this culture liquidates earlier social forms and clears the way for the bureaucratic administration of consumerist client personalities.

Berman's convincing arguments were directed against a crucial assumption of the conference: that culture is some kind of repository of opposition to bureaucracy. In fact, the opposite appears to be closer to the truth. Modernist high art, which served Adorno as the vessel of emancipatory hopes, ends up legitimating all the major institutions of cultural bureaucracy from the Museum of Modern Art on down (or up). The revolutionary claims of international media culture, the classical culture industry, have even less plausibility, except for Benjaminian die-hards and neo-Leninists. A critique of bureaucracy today might begin to become effective only if it renounces the anachronistic claims of classical critical theory and confronts bureaucratic formations.

Berman concluded his paper with just such a challenge to the conference to conceptualize the character of culture in the wake of the crisis of the welfare state. Setting up

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corollaries first between laissez-faire capitalism and the substance of nineteenth-century aesthetic culture (salons, realism) and, second, between administered society and modernism, he went on to suggest a connection between the neo-conservative dismantling of the welfare state and the culture of post-modernism. Post-modernism relies on a reinvigorated art-market (based on massive corporate art investment) outside of the bureaucratic museums in which modernist art eventually found its cozy home. Similarly, the categories of post-modernism — its eclecticism, the rejection of the formal rigor of high modernism, the conformist celebration of power — echo key neo-conservative tenets. Certainly, cultural neo-conservatives like William Bennet and Hilton Kramer advocate a reactionary traditionalism very different from the effete innovations of post-modernity. Yet, Berman pointed out how the specific character of the hegemonic post-modern hostility to modernism repeats the conservatism that has emerged since the mid-seventies. The connection appears to be close to what Goldman means by a "structural homology."

Just as one need not be a neo-conservative to recognize that the bureaucratic welfare-state has run its course (and that is nowhere clearer than here in British Columbia), one need not subscribe to the tenets of fashionable postmodernism to understand that the emancipatory claims of modern art and/or the culture industry no longer ring true. Is there an emancipatory alternative to post-modernism as a program for culture after the welfare state? Or can the critics of bureaucracy, who want to differentiate themselves from neo-conservatism, stop relying on their old friend culture as the unlikely agent of social transformation? Unfortunately the leftist bureaucratic sympathies that predominated at the conference prevented any extensive consideration of this question.

Next, Paul Piccone discussed the relation of "Critical Theory and the Intellectuals." According to him, Adorno and the first generation of the Frankfurt School had no theory of bureaucracy other than an uneasy modified Weberian account. With Adorno, any systematic social theory is suspect since it feeds into identity logic and, therefore, into an apology for predominant social relations. Yet, the Frankfurt School bought the predicament of the iron cage. But Adorno and Co. could not have foreseen the crisis of bureaucratic rationality and, consequently, his vindication of the privileged role of aesthetics and philosophy is obsolete. Today artists and intellectuals are as integrated as anyone into the logic of domination and the reproduction of predominant ideological forms. In this situation, artists and intellectuals — particularly Left intellectuals — forfeit their radical role and tend to become impotent apologists for an earlier phase of capitalist organization: the welfare state phase. In fact, with the rise of the welfare state and its concomitant education industry, intellectuals have become agents of the bureaucratic apparatus not qualitatively different from Eastern European apparatchiki.

This structural de-radicalization also has had detrimental consequences for advanced capitalism since it has deprived the system of a crucial critical dimension that functioned as an internal control mechanism and as a rationalizing element. Furthermore, bureaucratic efforts to encourage the revitalization of this functional radicalism through research institutes and, more broadly, the academization of radical intellectuals only stifles radicalism further by turning intellectuals into academics. Today, according to Bertell Ollman, some 12,000 Marxists teach in U.S. universities, (and, probably, a few thousand more in Canadian ones) but have absolutely no social and political impact outside petty departmental policies.

This predicament is further complicated by the fact that it is not merely a matter of simply another counterproductive bureaucratic cooptation and stifling of social re-

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flectivity, but it also involves the redefinition of objective social conflicts. More than ever before, the bureaucratic/educational intelligentsia today finds itself defending the welfare state, not in the interests of its clients who no longer primarily benefit from the bureaucratic apparatus, but in its own interest as a group of well paid "professionals" intent on maintaining their eroding social privileges. Thus, despite severe internal weaknesses, recent theories of the "new class" capture an important new phenomenon: radical intellectuals have not just ceased to be radical, but are objectively conservative in their new social role and obstacles to any emancipation.

Critical theory itself has not escaped this general phenomenon. The "linguistic turn" in the middle 1960s effectively turned the "new and improved" critical theory into an ideology for intellectuals as a privileged social stratum. Its emphasis on language and communication as cultural capital seeks to empower politically otherwise impotent intellectuals against capital's economic hegemony. The demagogic emphasis on democracy, justice, and equality within a mythical project of modernity further marginalizes growing numbers of linguistically incompetent masses, whose interest representation they usurp as political weapons with which to confront predominant economic interest in the political arena. Misdirected as it may seem in the age of neo-conservatism, this conformist, right-wing aberration of critical theory still provides an optimistic outlook. Habermas' recycling of social democracy and enlightenment ideology is also predicated on the assumption that modernity as a project is in the process of being realized. But this is clearly counterfactual and modernity is not only far from being realized but may not be realizable *in principle.*

Right-wing linguistified critical theory polemically decouples economics and politics against the reductionism of orthodox Marxism. But in so doing it ends up recycling a conformist and over-optimistic projection of capitalist rationalization within a bureaucratic social democratic framework. To exemplify his point, Piccone argued that even left social movements and causes manifestly advocating democratization, equality and autonomy today in fact have exactly the opposite result. The ideology of modernity in advanced capitalist societies today encourages both increasing domestic and international stratification while stifling any real progress towards the kind of emancipation it otherwise advocates. Even presumably emancipatory social movements such as the feminist, black, peace and ecological movements have deteriorated to particularistic interest groups effectively functioning within a neo-corporatist framework. The new task of critical theory, therefore, is to not only develop a theory of bureaucracy adequate to the totally administered society, but also unrelentingly to criticize intellectuals as the agents of the so-called "new class." Far from being the solution, intellectuals are rapidly becoming a significant part of the problem.

To the extent that the presentations took almost three hours, there was little time for discussion. But in the few questions that were asked it was possible to discern already some of the positions that would concretize during the next two days: covert defenses of welfare state ideology and lingering Marxist-Leninist nostalgia. Predictably, the populist objection was immediately raised: classical critical theory and the theorists of artificial negativity overlook the large numbers of autonomous moral agents attempting to be effective socio-political subjects. Predictably also, this populist argument readily slipped into an apology for Marxist-Leninist forms of organization when confronted with the facts of alienation, narcissism, disintegration and political ineffectiveness. When the untenability of this latter standpoint was readily shown, it quietly slid back into a rediscovery of the virtues of the welfare state. All of which goes to show the fragility of radical intellectuals and how easily the vindication of the cultural sphere

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against bureaucratic asphixiation turns into its opposite. And this was a preview of things to come: culture bureaucratized, populism turned into Marxism-Leninism and welfare state apology, while critical theory and artificial negativity, effective in criticizing everything under the sun, could not offer a ray of hope for anything. To quote and apply Jacoby's law of the falling rate of intelligence, that could have been one of the last times in which the critique could even have been made and understood.

The evening session was opened with a totally irrelevant paper by Glen McDougal on Mehring and Workers' Theater Movement at the turn of the century in Germany. What this had to do with the price of tomatoes escaped everyone. It was the first of a series of papers tightly strung together over the next two days as to allow very little chance for discussion. As a rule these papers had very little to do with the main theme of the conference, and it soon became clear that their only function was to serve as an excuse for petty careerists to maybe 1) pad their *curriculum vitae* and, 2) receive reimbursement from their home universities for travel expenses by virtue of having "presented a paper." Typical of this insidiously opportunistic mentality was the paper by Howard Brick on Daniel Bell. Brick, author of a soon to appear biography of Bell, provided a flat synopsis of his already completed study, making no discernable effort to address explicitly problems of "bureaucracy and culture," despite the fact that Bell's work lends itself superbly to such thematic focus. The fact that Brick himself attended only his own session and was otherwise not to be seen at the conference either before and after seemed only to confirm the mercenary nature of his presence. The same could be said for a paper by Andrew Koch on "Bureaucracy and Freedom: A Weberian Perspective" — an effort that can charitably be described as a C+ beginning graduate student misdirected synopsis of Weber.

At any rate, the first day's evening session went on with a presentation by Brian Palmer on Thompson, Deutscher and James engaged in an imaginary debate in Moscow around 1936. Palmer's imagination was even wilder in providing a Trotskyist framework for his presentation by invoking oxymorons such as "the workers' state" and vague intimations that the USSR could have developed otherwise — had it not been for imperialism — and other standard apologetic devices to salvage the purity of the Bolshevic revolution. As incompetent Stalinists, Trotskyists are best known for their elaborate explanations of why they missed the revolutionary boat at every historical turn. Palmer's paper was no exception, but the political and theoretical vacuity was at least partly mitigated by an elegant presentation.

After that, there were two more presentations concerning which, however, little can be said in this report since the by-then exhausted reporter, still recovering from jet-lag, fell asleep. The structuring of the conference with wall-to-wall papers finally took its human toll on a significant chunk of the audience. In fact, given this intellectual overloading, after the first day it became physically impossible to attend all the papers. It is thus advisable to merely focus on highlights rather than summarize all the particular sessions.

Although nearly all subsequent speakers referred back to Weber, many called into question his vision of an inexorably expanding bureaucracy leading to an inescapable iron cage or the thorough administration described by classical critical theory. This revision, however, took various forms. Doubts were raised regarding Weber's structural description of bureaucratic organization as efficient, even on its own terms. Instead, it was more interesting to discuss how bureaucracies create conflicts, rather than simply control them. Similarly, the manner in which bureaucracies operate in tandem with non-bureaucratic, informal modes of social interaction was discussed,

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especially by Steven Sampson. As in earlier conferences, Sampson focused on his field of expertise, Eastern Europe. No one can deny the weight of bureaucracies in Soviet-style societies. Yet, irregular and interpersonal relations can coexist with the administrative apparatus of the state. For example, because the state-controlled press is thoroughly discredited, special value is ascribed to oral communication and rumors. In Rumania, even the most fantastic tales circulate and retain credibility, e.g., that the former King has landed with a cavalry division. On the other hand, the bureaucracy manipulates this communicative dimension by planting rumors: the influence of dissident writers has been undermined by apparatchiks who spread the word that this or that author writes poorly, since only good authors make good dissidents. Of course, Poland provides the most dramatic example of non-bureaucratic cultural institutions outside of the purview of the state administration. This informal realm can therefore represent an opposition to the state or it may be penetrated by the state as a realm in which the bureaucracy can maneuver without controlling it fully. In either case, the description of a thoroughly organized, one-dimensional bureaucratic domination is inadequate.

For Sampson, this insight remained a matter of an anthropological description of bureaucratic structures coupled with informal relations. For other speakers, the critique of the model of full bureaucratization took on a historical character through the examination of social policy after the heyday of the welfare state. Per Selle described how both the Conservative and Labor Parties in Norway participated in the shift from a model of full state administration to an emphasis on a cultural policy that has financed the growth of voluntary organizations as an alternative to state bureaucracy. "Culture" is apparently politicized in order to mediate the dismantling of the welfare state, which however simultaneously entails a transformation of culture. Democratic arguments regarding the elitist character of traditional bourgeois high culture are initially mobilized in order to redefine all local activities as cultural practices of equal value. Consequently, culture ceases to carry a normative value or utopian content and becomes nothing more than every particular leisure activity. This culture policy, which was launched in order to defend Norwegian particularity against the influence of the international culture industry, ends up in a bad egalitarianism that feeds into the trends that it was supposed to oppose: privatization, consumerism and the standardization of culture. In addition, the leftist attack on bourgeois high culture finds itself functioning as the alibi for a neoconservative policy that attacks the state bureaucracy while encouraging the growth of a conformist culture.

Selle labeled the shift from welfare-statist administration to voluntary cultural organizations a "privatization of the public." A similar development was identified in one of the high points of the conference, the discussion by Risto Erasaari of "the new social state." Like Selle, Erasaari was concerned with the character of social formations in the wake of the crisis of the welfare state, but he did not limit his account to one specific cultural policy. Rather, Erasaari described the emergence of "social networks" as an alternative to welfare-state management. While by no means nostalgic for the erstwhile welfare state, he described the negative consequences of network society in which "everyone becomes a social worker for each other." The insistence on "networking" certainly helps shrink the state apparatus and diminish costs but only by universalizing the repressive character of the therapeutic society. The narcissistic needs generated by the welfare state do not disappear if the bureaucracy is cut back. Instead the needs are addressed in the new imperative of networks to which everyone is gradually compelled to belong.

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The network thrives on interpersonal relations held together by either a moral or a natural feeling of togetherness. Consider, e.g., the moralizing character of the feminist "community" or the naturalization of politics in the environmental movement. What is lost, of course, is a sense of the social character of political issues, as Erasarri pointed out with his rhetorical question: "What moral naturalness applies to the question of wages?" In addition, the network society is evident in a shift of ideological attention from the productive sphere to communities; the political parties, the churches, the unions, and the new social movements all pay more attention to everyday culture and "lifestyle" than to experience at the workplace. Erasarri underscored this point not because of an *ouvrierist* insistence on the priority of the point of production but because the full denial of the workplace by the network movement is apparently symptomatic of its conservative character.

The network society model is especially interesting because it provides an explanation for the resurgent nationalism of the eighties. The search for a conservative cultural identity outside of the state leads to the emphatic articulation of national heritages, often through the network method of oral history. The hidden message is always the desire to return to a simple order of everyday life where the complexities of modern society would no longer beset the individual fully integrated into a local community where nothing ever changes: the micropractices of the rhizome represent the conservative alternative to social emancipation. Consequently, any history or narrative historiography becomes problematic because ultimately the unchanging national heritage undergoes no historical transformation. In the neoconservative *posthistoire* the subject is neither a proletarian worker nor a bourgeois citizen but merely an intersection of different lines of power within the national community. Robbed of any individual subjectivity, the person loses the ability to participate in long-term human ties which are displaced by ephemeral contacts and relations, just as all matters of substance disappear since they are denied any particularity within the inescapable network.

To the extent that the conference this time was sponsored primarily by the English Department, it would have been surprising if deconstructionists did not stake some sort of claim. Yet, although Derrideans and their fellow-travelers often masquerade as radicals, the conference — despite all its shortcomings — was probably just too much concerned with social phenomena to attract many avatars of textuality. However, one party-line post-structuralist did show up for a brief performance. Subscribing to Derrida's claim that written language precedes speech and oral communication, Stan Fogel arrived with a lengthy paper on "Michel Foucault's Touchstone's" which he read so quickly that it became nearly incomprehensible. Despite the self-subversion of his own speech, one could make out all the familiar claims; the post-structuralists call into question the presuppositions of discourse; they undermine the authority of institutionalized criticism; they attack the legitimacy of all established canons; and they threaten the stability of conservative cultural identity.

All this boils down, of course, to a new wrinkle on old claims that cultural innovation threatens the entrenched power-that-be, as if the post-structuralists were just a recycled version of romantic poets firing off their rhymes and rhythms against dark satanic mills. Many comments from the audience pointed out the weaknesses in this argument. Instead of undermining presuppositions, post-structuralism merely reifies them in the form of Foucault's "episteme," which functions as the inescapable framework of discourse. Instead of challenging the practice of canonization, post-structuralism simply undertakes a minor revision, shifting attention from Wordsworth, Eliot and

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Pound to Nietzsche, Borges and Beckett. Instead of eroding the power of institutionalized new critics, the new critics just attack their older colleagues in order to assert their own power as the "authority of interpretive communites," to use Stanley Fish's term.

The claim that current literary critical developments represent a viable counter-hegemonic political force is particularly curious, as one questioner from the *Telos* contingent pointed out, if one recalls how deconstructive and post-structuralist critics have occupied important positions in many of the most prestigous universities in the United States: Yale, Harvard, Cornell, Columbia, Wisconsin (the situation here in Canada is somewhat different). Rather than regarding this as a subversive potential, a better account would examine this change as an effort to modernize cadaverous English departments by shifting attention from the preservation of traditional cultural identity to the development of technologies of reading. Faced with an epidemic of functional illiteracy, foundations and university administrations that are carrying out this transformation of higher education recognize that the old-style Anglo-American literary canon makes little sense in the age of multinational capitalism and the waves of third world immigration. In this new literacy campaign, the inherited bourgeois values of personal autonomy and emancipation are jettisoned, since the goal is simply to train upcoming generations of computer technicians and service industry workers how to make their way through "texts." So much for subversion.

One of the planned high points of the conference, the Benjamin session, unfortunately fizzeled out into esoteric nit-picking and dubious exegeses. The main speaker, Susan Buck-Morss managed to come only shortly before she was scheduled to speak and was clearly exhausted by the time she got to the microphone. To complicate things, she chose to focus on a newly discovered hermeneutical tool — a set of co-ordinates with inescapable eschatological conotations — to interpret Benjamin's *Passagen-werk*. Having spent innumerable hours deciphering this relatively irrelevant work, it was only natural that she had to milk it for all it was worth by presenting it as the key to an understanding of Benjamin. The scholastic presentation, however, although academically compentent, did not manage to draw any of the politically significant points, nor to discuss in any way why a seemingly insignificant thinker such as Walter Benjamin is suddenly receiving so much attention. Since she had missed Wolin's presentation, Buck-Morss could not address his tongue-in-cheek suggestion that it may have to do with the recent rise within the academy of English Departments, not because of any intrinsic importance, but merely as a result of a panicked bureaucratic response to rising illiteracy by throwing money at English Departments to solve the problem. Under the cloak of academic freedom, however, English Departments find it beneath their dignity to figure out how to teach mostly lower class children how to read and write; rather, they choose to use those newly available resources to decode Benjamin, or to organize esoteric conferences on textuality and similarly "vital" issues.

Whatever points could have been made regarding the phantomatic coordinator, however, never had a chance to surface since the rest of the evening was choked with a meaningless slide presentation and a rambling paper presumably on Benjamin by Peter Wollheim which took over an hour and a half and lulled the audience to sleep. Needless to say, by the next day everyone had completely forgotten whatever minor points had transpired and the question of Benjamin never reappeared in the next two days of the conference.

A potentially interesting discussion on the question of the New Class following presentations by Kingsley Widner and Evan Alderson was short-circuited by the panel

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chairman, the head of the local Marxist-Leninist contingent, which happened to be appropriately named Stockholder. Thus, instead of dealing with Widmer's negative evaluation of the new class or with Alderson's analysis of the genesis and evolution of the Canada Council, the discussion degenerated into a refutation for the *n*th time of the claims that the Communists in the 1930s dealt with real issues, that they had an economic critique of society or that they did concern themselves with people's everyday problems. No iota of Communist apology was allowed to pass by unchallenged and at the end it was pretty clear that the Marxists had absolutely nothing to say on the question of the new class. Surprisingly enough, there was no discussion of the Konrad-Szelenyi book which makes the question of the New Class central for Eastern European communist regimes.

Questions of run-of-the-mill bureaucratic functioning and its interfacing with culture did manage to arise in, e.g., a panel on the "Bureaucratic Management of Scientific Knowledge." But the discussion of how regulatory criteria are set never clearly outlined how the process works other than the very profound insight by one of the speakers, Liora Salter, that scientists package their scientific results differently for different audiences, or William Leiss' equally brilliant discovery that in litigations concerning ecological issues, scientifically ignorant judges tend to pay more attention to scientific testimony which is free of any partisanship. It is not by accident that the panelists, who otherwise attended no other session of the conference, happened to be bureaucratic functionaries doing sponsored research in the typical sociological mode: by wasting taxpayers' money to re-package into technical sociologese commonsense and tautologies. One can only wonder how long it will take Canada to do what the U.S. has already started, albeit, under neoconservative auspices: the phasing out of sociological research and other expensive irrelevant academic endeavers.

One of the high points of the conference was reached Thursday afternoon in the discussion of state terrorism which was notable above all for its recrudescence of unreformed Stalinism. C. Heijman began his presentation with a polemic against discussion, theory, and conceptual precision — his would be a *political* talk. As Wolf-Dieter Narr pointed out later, it would be the height of self-delusion to expect any immediate political consequences from a five-day gathering of intellectuals from all corners of the globe. In a strikingly self-contradictory fashion, Heijman's talk itself was notable for its dearth of political content; instead, he offered a fully conventional intellectual history of previous unsatisfactory attempts to define the concept of state terrorism. The second paper, presented by Heinz Dietrich, offered an extended critique and analysis of the specificity of state terrorism in the Latin American context. The account was empirically sound, but marred by omissions. For example, the case of Stalinism was conveniently bypassed by his analytical framework.

The discussion began with a critique of Heijman's rabid anti-intellectualism. It was pointed out that only a bureaucratic mentality would suggest the suppression of discussion and conceptual clarity. Moreover, since his own concept of politics (for the moment at least) remained undefined, it was precisely more discussion and conceptual precision that was needed given the failures of left-wing political struggle in the past.

It was also pointed out that there remained a glaring oversight in the two papers on state terrorism: not a single reference to Stalinist Russia was made. Soon it became clear that the omission was intentional. When queried about this problem, Heijman ceded to Dietrich, whom he said was an "expert" on the subject. Dietrich began his answer by providing a schema by means of which a global concept of state terrorism

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could be attained. One criterion to be employed was that of "legal" forms of state terrorism. The implication was that the extra-legal form of state terrorism in Latin American made it more sinister, since it 1) served to deflect legitimation problems from the governments themselves, who could "blame" uncontrollable para-military forces; and 2) accorded the terror in these societies an arbitrary form, supposedly much more thoroughly intimidating than the "legal" forms in Eastern European societies. The absurd conclusion one was expected to draw from this assessment was that state socialist societies were not, strictly speaking, state terrorist, since there state terror was "legal." Of course, this slight of hand was intended to uncouple the analysis of Latin American, right-wing state terrorism from instances of socialist state terrorism. The Leninist simplicity of such claims did not get very far with the audience. To call the terror of Stalinist Russia "legal" is an insult to the concept of legality, which also betrays a typical crypto-Leninist disregard for "legality" in general. To suggest that state terror during the height of Stalinism was somehow less "terrifying" or "arbitrary" than its contemporary counterparts in Latin American is a ridiculous distortion of historical fact, as anyone vaguely familiar with the writings of Solzhenitsyn, Mandelstam and Ciliga knows well.

However, when pressed on this point, Dietrich's arguments degenerated further. He sought to invoke an additional criterion to uncouple socialist from fascist employment of state terrorism: this time by attempting to rehabilitate the mythical distinction between "progressive" instances of state terrorism vis-à-vis illegitimate, "regressive instances." Such "progressive" instances, he continued, could be judged on the basis of the "class composition" of the regime. At this point, many members of the audience (Wolin, Narr) were fully insensed; a situation that hardly improved as Dietrich, when under attack, attempted to invoke the slaughter of 5-6 million Kulaks in 1929 as a "justifiable" case of progressive state terrorism. At this point in the discussion, Susan Buck-Morss intervened, to suggest that one could maintain the distinction between "progressive" and "regressive" uses of state terrorism, insofar as progressive state terrorism would be supported by a majority of the population — a criterion that turns Hitler into a progressive state terrorist. It was then pointed out to Buck-Morss that, for example, a 55% to 45% majority could hardly justify state terrorism; and that the problem of such arguments is that it is perennially some vanguard party claiming to represent a majority that inevitable usurps the general will. All attempts at justifying state terrorism are inherently suspect.

Narr switched the plane of discussion temporarily to the emergence of the *Sicherheitstaat* in West Germany, forseeing a scenario whereby a majority of, say, two-thirds of the population supported emergency decrees against the remaining third of the populace in order to maintain its privileged status. This remaining third — unemployed, minorities, youth, the aged — would then be marginalized as a sort of permanent underclass. Narr's analysis remained cogent until he attempted to deny the peculiarly German character of the *Sicherheitstaat* and claim that this was a phenomenon typical of all western democracies. Focusing too closely on the German situation, Narr failed to realize that there is a long tradition of respect for basic civil liberties in Western Europe and the U.S. that would not be nearly as easy to breach as has been historically the case in Germany. Unlike the two main speakers, and some "progressives" in the audience, Narr readily came to his senses when other members of the audience compared the German case with those of Italy, France and the U.S.

The concluding session of Friday afternoon seemed marred by unprecendented levels of incoherence. Contributing unselfishly to the confusion was Gerald Butler

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who earlier had presented a relatively insipid paper on Dickens. His only mission seemed to be to torpedo any possibilities of overcoming bureaucracy through an appeal to an unspeakably crude version of Freud's theory of instinct. Where Butler wanted to take his unsophisticated partisanship for "Thanatos" was never quite clear and led him to some spectacular conceptual contradictions. His basic intention in defending the integrity of the death instinct *cum* an insurmountable quantum of human aggression was to argue that bureaucracy served as some kind of salutary lid on such tendencies. Apparently, Butler had never heard of Freud's theory of sublimation, so that pure repression of instinct seemed the only solution. But it was unclear that he was aware of the at best Hobbesian, at worst authoritarian implications of his argument. Moreover, his simplistic formulation of the problem — innate aggressivity and the need to keep it in check — seemed to overlook the fact that "repression" was hardly a solution embraced by Freud, but in fact the reverse side of the problem itself: repression is hardly a positive concept in Freud's theory. Butler's "pessimism," which he wore like a cub-scout merit badge, seemed to leave one with two woefully simplistic alternatives: either the eternal recurrence of bureaucracy or else we would all "start beating our wives," as he quaintly phrased it — an analysis that only confirmed the suspicion that his understanding of bureaucracy was as reductive as his comprehension of Freud. As a parting shot directed at his *Telos* critics, he warned that one would never be able to be a pessimist (why this was a desirable goal was never fully explained) if one has a "telos" — this despite the fact that Wolin's keynote address on Monday consisted of an extended polemic against the perils of teleological thinking. Moreover, this was the first time in recent memory (or perhaps anywhere), that *Telos* was accused of harboring a surfeit of optimistic sentiment.

On the whole the conference was well organized and whatever the shortcomings of the participants, it is encouraging that some people are still willing to expend all this energy and time to keep alive a rapidly declining critical dimension. One of the more dubious results of the conference, however, seemed to be the bureaucratization of the conference itself. Hence, there were various rumors circulating towards the end that the next one may be held in Rio de Janeiro, then one in Istanbul, and, who knows, eventually even Nairobi or Peking — assuming UNESCO funding can be secured. Confronted with this scenario, one can only hope that Canada will follow the U.S. and get the hell out of UNESCO.

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# THE AMERICAN MODEL AND THE FUTURE OF THE LEFT*

By André Gorz

The economic policies of the French Left are based on the hypothesis that the modernization of the industrial apparatus and the resurgence of the spirit of business enterprise are indispensable preconditions for the resumption of economic growth and a major reduction of unemployment. To support this line of argument, many experts (of all shades of political opinion), refer to Reagan's America. What exactly is this experience about? Is it a possible model?

Can capitalism resolve its employment and distribution problems when, due to the impact of automation and computerization, the production process requires less and less work, and pays out less and less in wages? Recent U.S. developments offer answers to this question of the greatest interest. So far the American economy appears to have succeeded in creating more jobs in new branches of industry than automation and computerization have eliminated in others.

The creation of more than 13.2 million jobs in a ten-year period is considered by neo-liberals and conservatives, but also by French social-democrats, to be a direct result of the dynamism of American business, most notably in new technologies. "If only," we are told, "we knew how to re-activate market forces and free enterprise, the problems of employment and of inadequate demand would be quickly solved." This, presumably, is because "increased productivity causes an increase in disposable income, which, in turn, when re-invested or spent, will bring about an increase in wealth and employment."

*The Degradation of the Quality of the New Jobs Created*

Developments in the U.S. labor market provide an interesting corrective for this opinion. They reveal a growing dichotomization of society. For new jobs, which made possible the reduction of the 1984 U.S. rate of unemployment to 1981 levels, were not created either in industry or in the modern tertiary sector (research, computer and communication industries, bio-technology, etc.), but mainly in service industries which offer only insecure jobs, demand little in terms of skills, and offer even less in career possibilities.

Of the 13.2 million jobs created since 1973, private service industries created 12.3 million and the public services 2.2 million — during the same period industry eliminated 1.3 million jobs. The greatest increases in employment were registered in the following fields: secretaries (+ 1,000,000); cashiers (+ 556,000); nurses and nurse's aides (+ 501,000); cooks (+ 400,000).

High technology provided a total of 170,000 "skilled" jobs, of which 127,000 were in computer fields. The trend seems even more clear if one considers the record of the past five years: from March 1979 to March 1984, the number of jobs in industry decreased by 2.4 million (90% of which were eliminated in large firms), while the number of tertiary jobs increased by 4 million. According to forecasts by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics in about ten years the tertiary sector will employ about 73% of workers

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(compared with 53% in 1950 and 70% in 1984), the expansion of employment probably being greatest in the following occupations: Guards and cleaning personnel (+800,000); Salesmen/women and cashiers (+941,000); Employees and waiters/waitresses in fast food restaurants (761,000); Secretaries (700,000); Nurse's aides (+507,000); Nurses (+401,000). The greatest decreases in manpower are predicted for agriculture (−481,000) and public education (−228,000). According to these official forecasts, there would be as many waiters and waitresses (2.07 million) in about a decade as persons employed in agriculture (2.14 million). The proportion of people employed in industry, currently 18%, could, according to a forecast by Peter F. Drucker, fall to 10%. The 3% increase in the proportion of tertiary jobs will not go very far towards compensating for this decrease.

The main characteristic of the current process of "tertiarisation" is the increase in the number of insecure, temporary jobs, often part-time and without union protection, at the expense of stable, full-time employment covered by collective bargaining agreements. According to Harrison and Bluestone,[1] "job-quality" has deteriorated significantly during the last fifteen years: 67% of the jobs created during these years lack job qualifications and pay less than $13,000 per year, compared with 45% of those that existed fifteen years ago. In other words, the proportion of men and women who can consider their work as a source of social and occupational identity is steadily diminishing, on the one hand, while, on the other, the proportion of men and women for whom work is just a means of survival, and not an activity that assures them social integration, mobility, and respect, is constantly increasing.

In 1980, industries in advanced technology employed a total of 3.06 million persons, i.e., 3.04% of American wage-earners. In terms of manufactured value, these industries — essentially those of communications and data-transmission; data-processing; automation; production of electronic component parts; computer-manufacturing — generated 16.8% of industrial production (including the construction industry), and 34.9% of American industrial investment The belief that the upswing of these industries can solve the problem of mass unemployment, even in part, is refuted both by past experience and official forecasts.

Whereas investments in the computer and communication industries increased by 11.1% per year from 1973 to 1980, employment increased by only 17.7% in seven years, i.e., by not even 2.5% per year. In Japan, it did not increase at all. For the period from 1982 to 1995, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics forsees an increase of only 37.8% of employment, i.e., roughly the same rate of increase as from 1973 to 1980. It observes in particular that the jobs created in all branches of advanced technology will represent just 6% of all jobs created.[2]

The postulate that "the increase of productivity causes an increase of disposable income," the re-investment and consumption of which would create additional jobs, is not true even in the computer and communication industries. Despite their exceptionally high productivity, wage earners in these industries are poorly paid. Production-line workers in the manufacturing of micro-circuits receive at most 70% of the wages paid by the automobile industry in the 1970s. The Silicon Valley factories, among others, give preference in employment to young, women, immigrants from the Third World: the Philippines, Viet-nam, Mexico.[3]

1. Article in the *Herald Tribune,* June 20, 1984.

2. For more details, cf. *Science et Vie,* nr. 806, Nov. 1984, and Robert Magnaval's article "Les technologies de pointe et l'emploi aux États-Unis," *Futuribles,* nr. 84-85, Jan.-Feb. 1985.

3. The low wages paid by these high technology industries cannot be explained by the weak size or newness of these firms. For, contrary to the widespread opinion, the concentration of these

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*Bad Surprises in the "New Tertiary"*

The new structure of the labor market which is currently being established corresponds, then, to the scenario of "dualistic stratification" which I have described elsewhere,[4] that is, an ever thinner elite of professionals, adhering to the traditional values of productivism and the profit-ethic, monopolize the minority of stable, skilled, well-paid jobs, and, together with management, expel from both the production process, and society, the mass of new "marginals," who become the new majority.

In the United States, this mass is to limited to the 7.4% who are officially counted as unemployed, but also includes the 35 million poor (15% of the population), among whom one finds a majority who have taken jobs in the "new tertiary" which are insecure, and part-time, often paying only the minimum wage of $3.55 per hour (and sometimes less) — a rate which does not even equal the purchasing power of the French *SMIC* (minimum wage). Looking more closely at the nature of the tasks covered by this "new tertiary," one perceives that it most often involves household tasks: the cleaning, maintenance and guarding of offices and apartments — caretaking and personal services (including "secretaries"), kitchen work, dish-washing, and the preparation of meals, etc.; i.e., typically "reproduction work," of the type which was done in Ancient Greece by Slaves, is done in South Africa by a swarm of black domestics, and elsewhere by the "feminia domestica."

It is in the domain of the industrialization of this domestic work of reproduction that the spirit of business enterprise is exercised in America. Of the 600,000 new businesses started each year in the U.S., the high-technology firms only account for 10,000, and jobs requiring advanced technological qualifications represent only 1.5% of the total, while the majority of firms and jobs are created by "micro-enterprises" which are taking over the domestic or household tasks of reproduction.

The Micro-electronic revolution, then, has as its primary, and paradoxical, effect the "South Africanization" of American society. It permits a leisured minority to buy a growing quantity of personal services from an ever more numerous and impoverished group of domestic workers which franchise companies put at the disposal of still "solvant" households. An army of health-care workers, of male and female domestics, of waiters and waitresses, and of short-order cooks (working in the fast-food outlets where American households now spend ¼ of their budgets) liberates some women — those who can pay — from domestic tasks, and transfers them to men and women for whom they become the sole source of income, and who are subject to increased oppression and over-exploitation.

All this takes place as though the millions of men and women who are expelled and excluded from the social process of production by automation and computerization, are competing for the privilege of selling their personal services to those who retain a full-time job, and an independent income or a stable, comfortable salary. Neoliberalism assumes its full meaning in this context: for it postulates, among other things, that lowering the minimum wage, reducing social protections, collective bargaining agreements, and unemployment compensation, will permit the labor market to find its equilibrium price level where supply and demand will equal out. In other words, the lower the price of labor, the greater the tendency to consume the labor of others will be, and the more jobs will be created.

industries is greater than that of American industry overall: 90% of the employees of high technology industries work in firms of more than 100 employees, whereas the average is 64% for the whole of industry.

4. Cf. *Les Chemins du Paradis* (Paris: ed. Galilee, 1983) pp.79-82. (English, South End Press; Boston, 1984)

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*The Alternative to Reconstructing a Left*

Milton Friedman and his American disciples recognize that the equalibrium price for labor runs the risk of sinking below the subsistance level, which amounts to saying that the abundance of labor would ultimately result in the physical extinction of a part of the population. This is why Mr. Friedman, and certain of his British and German emulators (if not his French followers) advocate that lowering social entitlements, and grants of all kinds, be accompanied by a guarantee of a minimum of subsistance in the form of a negative income tax: above a certain income threshold you pay taxes, below it the fiscal system pays you. The threshold would be fixed very low so that the marginalized population would be forced at all costs to find a job in order to obtain supplemental income. The guarantee of a subsistance minimum thus represents the base-condition on which the law of supply and demand in the labor market can play without restriction.

The guarantee of a subsistence minimum as it is envisaged by the Right is thus called upon to fulfill several functions: 1) it is an indirect subsidy for the creation of sub-marginal jobs and firms which would not otherwise be profitable if they had to pay their work force the full cost of its reproduction; 2) it represents a kind of compensation payment for unemployment, and marginalization, which aims at making the unemployment and underemployment of a growing proportion of the population tolerable; 3) it institutionalizes the division of society into two sectors in which fundamentally different levels and kinds of life and work prevail. It is the institution of the "dual socio-economy" of C. Stoffaes and J. Amado. In other words, it is the "South Africanization" of society, excluding in principle simultaneous membership in both sectors, or the ready shift from one to the other.[5]

In the future, the Left will be recognized not for demanding or implementing the life-time guarantee of a subsistence minimum for every citizen, but for rejecting the dualization of the economy, this splitting of society which the Right accepts as inevitable, where it does not extol and promote it.[6]

Nevertheless, this refusal has no chance of being imposed through a return to significant economic growth assuring full employment to all eligible workers. Wage labor, in any case, will not remain the primary life center for the vast majority of citizens. For if the future Left wants to avoid having a privileged elite monopolize skilled and stable jobs while condemning the rest of the population to unemployment or to sub-marginal, insecure jobs, one means alone is available to it: sharing salaried work among the entire active population by reducing the length of working-time. Assuming a 1.5% annual growth of available productivity, the average duration of work ought to be less than one thousand hours per year by the beginning of the next century, if the unemployed are to be reabsorbed.[7]

5. In contrast with the advocates of a "dual economy," who divide the working population into two separate economic sectors, one open and the other sheltered against international competition, I have shown the advantage of distinguishing, in practice, activities, belonging to what Marx and Engels, following Aristotle, call the "sphere of necessity" (work necessary to assure life and the functioning of the social infrastructures) and the "sphere of liberty" (pursued for optional, freely chosen ends, blending with the blossoming forth of life itself). The rationality of the two spheres being fundamentally distinct (that of the second has nothing to do with economics), I called "dualist" a society in which the two spheres would be governed by different forms of organization, with everyone belonging to both and finding fulfillment precisely through this double membership. Cf. *Adieux au Proletariat* (Paris: ed. Galilee, 1980) Chap. III, 3. (English tr., South End Press: Boston, 1983).

6. Cf. on this subject, the debate on the universal allocation in *la Revue Nouvelle,* Brussels, Feb. 1985.

7. Available productivity means the difference between the rate of growth of productivity and

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The Left's alternative to a shattered society, is thus a society in which everyone can work, but work very little, while being assured of a basic allotment sufficient to support a normal life-style during the entirety of one's life-span. This will be offered in exchange for a small amount of socially necessary work. In this conception, the lifetime guarantee of income would serve neither to consolidate the dualistic stratification of society, nor to make exclusion tolerable. It would be linked inextricably with the right to socialized labor and would be the normal renumeration, spread over a lifetime, paid for the minimum of necessary work owed by each citizen.[8]

This alternative is evidently not immediately realizable, anymore than were the reforms fifty years ago which finally gave birth to the now obselete welfare state. Today the vision of a society organized around a more liberated, polymorphous and largely self-managed time can be the guiding goal around which to reconstruct the Left, just as formerly the vision of the welfare state guided previous Lefts. The central requirement for this alternative is to share socially necessary work among the potential working population, and to give everyone the material and cultural possibility to make, produce and create all that is judged desirable outside salaried working time, and within the framework of the local community.

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the rate of economic growth. For instance, to clarify these ideas, this differential in France is currently about 2%. For the 1977-1984 period the annual growth of productivity was, according to INSEE, 5.2% in industry (6% during the 1965-1973 period). The apparent relative weakness of recent rates can be explained mainly by the retention of surplus workers in industry (5 to 10%), especially the services (in banks and insurance companies the surplus employees are estimated to be approximately 15%) without any consequent reduction of the work-week.

8. In *Les Chemins du Paradis (op. cit.)* I have tried to indicate the policies which it entails in different fields.

# MUST WORKING TIME BE REDUCED?

## by Daniel Mothé

Increased unemployment and its banalization provoke different responses from the population than those which occur in periods of full employment. As it becomes scarcer, work appears less as a constraint, while unemployment, by becoming normal, loses its attractiveness and becomes increasingly viewed as a constraint. It is the law of the market.

Consequently, it is not advisable to begin by assuming that all decreases of working time would be experienced as social progress by wage-earners. Non-work too can be experienced as a constraint. This is especially the case for the great majority of pre-retirees and retirees.

If work is considered as a rare commodity, its regulation is presented in totally different terms than when it was abundant. The first reproach I would direct at advocates of its decrease is that they believe that the valency of work is the same today as it was in 1968. However, there are two known methods for regulating a rare commodity. 1) The

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liberal method, very much in fashion today, which consists in letting things go and which will result in what Gorz describes: The workers who have less resources will see their living standards decline while those who are protected will see their privileges increase. This is the dual society, of which the US and England constitute the most advanced models. 2) The method of rationing which consists in reducing working time to divide it in an egalitarian moment among all the members of society. This, theoretically, appears more just. Yet, this solution also creates inequities.

The reduction of working time can be realized without any problem for all subordinate and Taylorized tasks. An assembly line worker could work just two hours per day without production being affected if, at the end of his shift, another comes to relieve him. It is a totally different matter for non-Taylorized tasks, especially for intellectual work, particularly work which implies research and creation. These tasks imply an accumulation of individual knowledge which is very difficult to parcel out and to transmit before the elaboration of the intellectual product is completed.

This is obvious for all artistic and scientific production (relativity would never have been discovered if Einstein had been compelled to work only 30 hours per week) but it is also true for technical work of all kinds. The repairman for an integrated circuit, the methods officer, or the engineering team who design new machines, have assignments which require a personal accumulation of data which they communicate only when sufficiently elaborated. In this type of intellectual task, parcellization is unthinkable, for that would require a considerable investment in time for reviewing the hypotheses and the communication of personal insights. Intellectual products are not transmitted in a form which is sufficiently detailed to be immediately communicated and grasped by others. This task of elaboration requires a significant continuous working time; its reduction would imply a disproportionate loss of productivity. Research and innovation can be realized only with investments in time which absorb the complete attention of these socio-professional categories.

Hence, there are two solutions: either reduce working time for all, with the country running the risk that the intellectual production will come to a complete stop or will depend on the ideas of others. Or else diminish only Taylorized working time, and thus intensify even more the gap between those who think and those who do.

The self-managment project is an egalitarian project in which people are asked to involve themselves in the intellectual elaboration of what they make. The reduction of working time runs totally contrary to this conception. Reducing the time of simple jobs means increasing the division between those who think and those who execute, which would end in the full-scale return of Taylorism. Either work is enriched and its content changed by increasing each person's investment, or it is degraded by parcelling it out.

The reduction of working time must not only be seen as a measure which the population is demanding, as a favor distributed by the State. It can also be viewed as a constraint for a certain number of persons. For example, to forbid Gorz from thinking about his work for more than 30 hours per week would certainly be experienced as a constraint by him. Quite a number of intellectual workers perceive work as a pleasure. Rationing work makes sense only if it provides work for others, but apart from Taylorized jobs, it is not at all clear that the reduction of working time of intellectuals would produce more employment. In a good number of cases, the opposite is true. By limiting his work time, this author would produce less books, hence less wealth and less jobs. It is unlikely that the reduction of his intellectual production would enable other workers to invade the market.

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# AGAINST CONFUSING AUTONOMOUS ACTIVITY WITH WAGE LABOR

## by André Gorz

In the face of a technological revolution which massively reduces the quantity of work demanded, there are the following alternatives: 1) Either a smaller and smaller core of full-time workers monopolizes the interesting jobs and marginalizes the majority of the population, with the unions degenerating into corporatist, elitist and conservative organizations; or, 2) wage labor is redistributed in such a way that all people can work less; work then ceases to be the central focus of life and the main source of identity. To survive, then, the union movement must transform itself so as to encompass the totality of human expectations (mainly cultural, non-economic, ecological), and no longer just expectations related to wage-labor.

Mothé presents a third route: everyone would enjoy working full time because all jobs would be enjoyable, creative and enriching. This sweet dream is an excuse to avoid the present dilemmas and for sparing the union movement the work of reflection and conversion which has already painfully began, mainly in Italy and Germany.

So much for the politico-strategic aspect. There remains the theoretical aspect: all activities do not have the same status and cannot be subsumed under the concept of "work." Today, this term designates mainly paid labor, which one is forced to sell, and thus to alienate, to a third party in order to gain one's livelihood. The labor movement was constituted as a reaction to the constraints of the wage-system; and I find it sad that some union militants are willing to consider work a commodity and to measure it by its "scarcity."

Along with many others, I call autonomous activity and not work that which is done out of free choice, for pleasure, according to a tradition that goes back to Aristotle. Autonomous activities "are end for themselves" (Marx) and merge with living time: they have neither an economic end nor a market value. For Einstein, who was an employee at the patent office in Zurich, theoretical physics was not his "work" but his autonomous activity outside work, his time-for-living. The same is true for almost all creative people. It is because it is not a work assigned to them that their autonomous activity mingles with the "joy in doing," although it is not exempt from suffering in other ways. The reduction of the duration of work (of tasks assigned to us) makes sense only if it is accompanied by the expansion of autonomous activities (including cooperative and community organizations), i.e, by the reduction of commercial relations in favor of richer social and interpersonal relations.

It is true that for a very thin fringe of professionals, autonomous activity and remunerated work coincide. These exceptions can become the rule. For the more complex a society, the more the mass of knowledge which it utilizes surpasses individual capacities. This makes the division and specialization of tasks inevitable.

Now, specialization, as attractive as it may be, does not allow either individual fulfillment nor creativity, not even of professionals, as skilled as a micro-surgeon, consulting engineer, theoretical physicist. Even for professionals and all the more so for others, the possibility of diversifying activities — of playing music, constructing their house, raising their children, reading or writing novels, being active in



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neighborhood cooperatives, etc. — is a source of enrichment and creativity. Thus, e.g., in the US several persons share one job as dean of a university, head of a personnel division, architect, legal counsel, or doctor.

Study the life of any high-level physicist, technologist, information specialist (most of all!) — starting with Einstein who spent more time strolling about, playing the violin, writing letters than in writing equations — and you will discover that creation is never done by those who invest themselves totally in their speciality, but by those who have multiple and alternate centers of interest.[1]

For everyone to have access to complex and creative activities, it will probably be necessary for those activities to cease being the monopoly of elites defensive of the power of domination which this monopoly confers on them. In order that no one should be committed full time to simply banalized, interchangeable tasks (which will subsist long after the elimination of Taylorism by robots), it will probably be necessary to distribute these tasks as broadly as possible by reducing the duration of work time in everyone's life with the aid of productivity gains.

The possibility (not the obligation) of working less and less hours without losing income will spontaneously be used advantageously by everyone. As for the high-level teachers and researchers, they have long since ignored schedule constraints and the calculation of labor time.

1. On all these points I must refer to theses 20 to 25 of *Chemins de Paradis* (Paris, Galilee, 1983). (English tr., South End Press: Boston, 1981)

# ARGENTINA AND THE FUTURE*

## by Jorge Schvarzer et. al.

SCHVARZER: "To visualize the near future in Argentina, it is necessary to consider some structural changes that have taken place during the last decade. First, important changes have taken place in the pampas' agricultural production in the last decade. After thirty years of stagnation, production took a formidable leap in excess of 24 to 40 million tons. This almost doubled Argentina's real export capacity. This leap might be seen as the result of the pampa-landowners managerial skills, but in reality is the consequence of a series of public policies and the effect of technological change which not only triggered this increase but showed, moreover, that agricultural production can grow even more: the production of cereals can be increased 50%, and this implies an almost 75% increase in Argentina's exports.

Secondly, there has been the discovery of gas-deposits of such magnitude that Argentina has become one of the world's leading gas-producing countries. On top of that, there are indications that unsuspected petroleum deposits are about to be discovered.

*This discussion between four Argentinian economists was originally published in *Debate*, 1985, vol. 1, n. 3. English translation by David J. Parent.

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These two new developments are having a significant effect on businessmen because Argentina is again beginning to look like the country it was at the turn of the century, i.e., with comparative advantages in the production of primary materials for the world market. This encourages the belief that Argentina could trigger a development process based on supplying primary materials to a world market that could absorb them relatively easily: cereals, because the demand for them in the Soviet Union and in the Eastern bloc countries is almost independent of the world market crisis, and petroleum and gas because a reasonable absorption capacity for them exists in a great part of the world at presently fluctuating prices.

This is very important because it coincides with the fact that the economic policies of the last decade are anti-industrialist and have caused the destruction of an important part of Argentina's industry. Above all, they discouraged investment in the industrial sector. Businessmen have lost the experience and the feeling for what it means to invest in the industrial sector. As a consequence, the development policies implicit in the economic proposals are designed to change Argentina back into a primary exporter of food and energy for the world market.

All this is linked with another phenomenon, the foreign debt, which has a series of effects on the country, two of which are central. On the one hand, the foreign debt generates compromises in economic policy; this in turn entails the loss of the freedom to define economic policies since it must submit to a series of external requirements. On the other hand, the equivalent of 8% of Argentina's gross national product must be paid to foreigners just to cover annual interest without even beginning to pay back the original debt. This, of course, generates strong political pressure for Argentina to export more, which will serve only to pay back foreign countries. Instead of generating an export strategy, it generates only a passive adaptation to the requirements of the situation. But it so happens that the debt, by requiring the transfer abroad of an important part of the national income, reduces domestic demand while limiting the domestic market's interest in industrial development. In other words, this strategy, which is merely an adaptation to necessities, implies readiness to accept the contraction of the domestic market as a way of implementing a type of political economy that promotes exportation generated not by the development of the domestic market but basically by production that is transferable abroad in the form of payments to creditors.

Now, unless the vicious circle can be broken, we will have to repeat the dramatic experience of the turn of the century, i.e., circumstances in which growth was based only on exports, which benefitted only the privileged sectors which, however, were automatically liquidated when the world market ceased being favorable. Because they were not based on a sustained development in real investment, in the use of technology, and in increased production and income these measures were doomed to fail."

KATZ: "Schvarzer has mentioned some long-term domestic features such as natural resources. Although I share his views, and, considering that Argentina is potentially rich in gas but not necessarily in petroleum, I would obviously emphasize gas. Given this state of affairs, it can have specific consequences for the process of reintegration into the world economy on the basis of natural resources: this integration should not be based on our petroleum export capacity but, rather, even if such a strategy is natural-resource intensive, by transforming our productive structure to gas-consumption, which imples a technological change in the entire capital-goods production sector.

But that is not what I wish to discuss here. To better frame the long-term discussion it seems pertinent to elaborate domestic and international variables. On these latter,

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there is one thing which cannot be disregarded: the world is undergoing new and dramatic structural changes concerning automation, especially cheap information-retrieval, and relatively expensive energy. The international scene is, thus, strikingly different from the one to which we are accustomed. In this new context the gradual substitution of different forms of information management in connection with the increasing level of automatization of the productive processes is essential.

The field of metals and machinery, which comprises almost a third of the industrial production of most developed economies, is increasingly aimed at the automation of short series production, abandoning the continuous processes typical of long series production — a phenomenon typical of the 1930s and 1940s. The automation of short series, is precisely the innovation that will predominate during the next two decades and will then seriously affect Argentina's international reintegration. On the other hand, the Argentina of the pre-and post-war years seems to have been relatively better endowed in skilled human resources then it is today to cross the electronic frontier. To the points made by Schvarzer, I would therefore add that Argentina will have to modernize in the contexts of an international comparative gap much more difficult to overcome than was the case before.

The other point is that an important generational change has occurred in the business community. It has to do with an equally important modification in psychology, that variable so difficult to define but so important for examining society's rate of accumulation. We somehow try to understand what changes it has undergone with the passing of a generation of businessmen who were fundamentally entrepreneurs in production and in industry, whose knowledge was intuitive and not based on professional training. This type of businessmen is retiring; they are being replaced by an industrial entrepreneur with a greater propensity for finances, for arbitrage between currencies and between titles, and for operations in the international capital markets. This conditions quite dramatically the perspective of international integration with which this enterpreneur deals, and explains his relative interest in production vis-à-vis banking or real estate.

Certainly, Argentina today can earn potential profits in the agro-livestock sector and in gas, and these significantly affect potentials for long-term growth. But this does eliminate the need to discuss the short-term, i.e., the transition which we will have to make in order to be able to devote ourselves to the long-term and to see how to exploit that primary income."

FRENKEL: "I want to add a few things from a long-range perspective and highlight certain features of the Argentine crisis relation to other crises: the international one and more specifically that of the rest of Latin America.

In a preliminary classification of Latin American countries a clear dichotomy can be seen between the Southern horn and the rest of the continent. Although they share some similarities in the type of crisis with Venezuela and Mexico, Argentina, Chile and Uruguay have one characteristic in common: their prospects of resuming growth through a policy of international financial integration are much worse. Theirs is a zone where the crisis affected the weakest link in this process of financial integration, the opening to capital movements conditioning the growth of this financial integration. A friend tells me that the center-periphery model is true, that it is an accurate depiction except for the fact that it ends in Saõ Paulo. Nonetheless, for the countries of the Southern horn, resuming growth has little to do with the center/periphery model.

Looking at Argentina from this perspective, but leaving aside Chile and Uruguay,

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this country is independent from the evolution of the international system. For example, Argentina grew uninterruptedly between 1964-1974, without recession, without problems in the balance of payments, with a debt of seven and eight billion dollars generated basically from services and not from problems in the balance of trade, with a relatively stable price-system — at least compared with what came afterwards. From a long-term perspective, the crisis of this model in 1975 cannot be explained from the viewpoint of Argentine integration into international commerce and finance. The crisis was the consequence of an endogenous process; it was not an induced crisis. The problem of the 1975 trade balance, of course, had to do with relative international prices, but it would have been manageable in 1973-1975 with *ad hoc* policy changes.

Starting in 1975 there was no further tendency to growth. On the other hand, the crisis of the balance of payments in the Argentina of 1981 occurred before the famous Mexican August of 1982, before talk of an international payment crisis, at a moment when Argentina was paying a "spread" of .6 above the prime rate. The banks had no problem continuing to lend to Argentina at the same rate as they did in 1979-1980, and no doubt the 1981 rate-hike was produced without any international detonator. The cases of Brazil, Mexico and Chile that followed are different. In other words, Argentina was a forewarning of what would come later, but its crisis was due fundamentally to an endogenous mechanism. While it is important to analyze the problem from an international perspective, one must not lose sight of social organization, consensus, and the development of the Argentine crisis.

But now I want to discuss some suggestions concerning the possibility of relaunching growth; these are endogenous, and in part common to other countries. In the first place, there have been ten years of recession, in the sense that the per capita production has been falling at about 15% and the per capita disposable income is one fourth less today than it was decade ago. Apart from being a dismal short-range fact, and a problem of current well-being, this shows the difficulties in resuming growth; this is the problem of psychology Katz mentioned. The growth of a capitalist economy is a fragile greenhouse flower, and this fragility is even greater in underdeveloped economies where growth was always controlled by the state through the regulation of the integration into international markets. If we agree that Argentina's growth was due to a withdrawal of trade in international finances, and was aided by the world war as well as by industrial and protectionist policies, one must then conclude that in Latin America growth always occurred against the grain of market forces. As a consequence, the idea that money can be earned in productive activity is always something volatile in Latin American economies. One problem is to revive the idea that it is possible to grow by accumulating fixed capital. This does not seem obvious, automatic, or something that results from a set of relative prices as claimed by those who locate the entire mechanism of growth in an attractive set of relative prices.

Secondly, there is the problem of preferences of the new businessman and of his portfolio. One of the particular characteristics of Argentina as far as financial integration is concerned, is diversification of the portfolio. An Argentine enterpeneur is, as never before, an international businessman. Between one-half and two-thirds of the external debt corresponds to foreign holdings in the hand of businessmen and wealthy consumers, in a context in which financial investments in the developed world are more attractive than ever. In other words, Argentine businessmen have not diversified their portfolio and they own a good part of the foreign assets we would need to pay off our external debt.

Third, there have been negative changes in the organization of labor. On the one

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hand, we have lost one third of the industrial labor force, at least in large industrial enterprises. On the other, as a counterpart to this, there has been a growth at an important underground economy and black market of labor as well as productive activities. In this sense there has been a recognition of losing the ability to organize labor.

These three characteristics — a pessimistic "psychology," a diversified and liquid portfolio able to seek opportunities abroad, and a deteriorated situation for organizing labor — have to be linked with short-term problems: with the fact that we have to generate some 6 to 7% of savings to make foreign payments. These ingredients constitute some of the difficulties involved in resuming growth. Investments would have to be seen in this perspective and placed in the framework of Katz's argument, i.e., who is going to invest, with what technology, for what type of products? In reality, three questions — who is going to invest, with what financing, and with what relations of production — are the ones we ought to ask."

MACHINEA: "I would like to emphasize two or three points. It is worth examining again some data concerning Argentina, although some of them have already been mentioned. Today the country is transferring abroad six percent of its production, and the adjustment for such transference has been made in the last years basically through a decline in imports and a slight rise in exports. In reality, except for the cases of Brazil, Mexico and Venezuela, this process has by no means occurred in all of Latin America. Some of these economies contract to generate an excess in their balance of trade and then deal with the problem of paying the interest on their foreign debt. In Argentina's case, what has happened is that this surplus for payments abroad has, at least from an accounting viewpoint, been taken from investments. At the present time, the Argentine economy is investing the lowest figure in its history: 12% of its gross product. In view of these facts, it is vitally important to know how payments of the debt well continue. One way is to follow the path of much of Latin America, i.e., to decrease imports. Today this means to lower production or to decrease the size of the economy. The other option is to try to pay the foreign debt by increasing imports significantly, but tying these into the processes of investment, which in turn leads to accumulation. This project of capital accumulation does not work by a process of import-substitution, as happened in the past. The problem is that the potential demand does not exist within Argentina. Yet, capital accumulation must somehow work through an economy that is more involved in the international scene — basically an economy with more imports. I agree with what Frenkel said in the sense that a new psychology must be behind this project of capital accumulation.

This returns me to my previous reflections on an Argentina engaged in the world through increased exports. These need not be simply in agriculture and livestock, or gas, or energy. We should become engaged in the industrial sector on an international plane — of course without ignoring the difficulties mentioned by Katz concerning a much more competitive international market and an ever more rapidly advancing technology. All this is very difficult, but I do not see any other way out. Specific projects to replace imports can be designated to reduce the external debt, but if it is paid without at the same time increasing exports, we will have a smaller and smaller economy. One task, then, is to generate a project of accumulation through or beyond exports. Considering what has happened in Argentina in recent years, this project will take some time to materialize. It will be necessary, for example, to wait for the private sector to believe that the public sector is really committed to this export project and that investments in that direction will be generated. In the meantime, the public sector

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must play a particular role: public investment must enable us to emerge from the recession which will be with us for most of 1985.

This is where the other short-term ingredient comes in: the International Monetary Fund. The strategy of increasing short-term public investment to get the economy moving out of the crisis cannot be undertaken by increasing consumption. Today we are consuming 31% of the product, and to think that the crisis can be overcome by increasing consumption — not forgetting that 6% must be transfered abroad — means to rule out any accumulation of capital.

There is no way to get out of the crisis other than by increasing investment. The problem is that, given the unstable situation of the financial market, to shift the psychology required for that investment growth is very complicated. So we must rely on the public sector, though this is also complicated by the IMF."

FRENKEL: "Yet, the Fund, besides seeking to maximize our shipment of products overseas, to honor interest payments and to amortize the debt, also has an ideological criterion: i.e., that to make the state smaller is to make the nation greater. It places restrictions not just on the balance of payments but also on the expansion of the public sector in relation to the rest of the economy. In Argentina the far-fetched idea exists that the private sector is efficient and automatically seeks the best use of resources; an absolutely far-fetched idea in a context where the private sector ostensibly prefers financial holdings. The result will be a short-term compromise with the Fund which becomes a long-term compromise that destroys the only viable possibility for resuming capital accumulation."

KATZ: "As economists, we place too much stress on the rate of accumulation and on the difficulties Argentina will encounter in resuming a reasonable rate of accumulation in the future. In reality, however much we consider it desirable, this will not happen. Moreover, I am not convinced that it is a priority for Argentina in the year 2000 to resume the rate of accumulation of today, though at some time in the future it will have to happen. But, for Argentine in the year 2000, it would be better to start from the idea of greater equity. We could enter the 21st century with a more viable, more reasonable, more acceptable, more acceptable social framework if society postpones its project of accumulation and poses more seriously the theme of equity in the distribution of burdens. Moreover, considering what Argentina is today, I fear far more the resurgence of violence than the possibility that society will not be able to start accumulating capital for a few years. In this sense, the potential seeds for the restoration of a scenario of violence in Argentine society are very much present, and although analysis of this question is outside an economist's field, the year 2000, at the latest, after an intervening scenario of violence, may see a dramatically different Argentina than the one we hope for today. The reasons for this possible scenario of violence are not far-fetched: Peronism, obviously, has not resolved its internal controversy and its solution could well involve violence within the Party which, in turn, could spill over to the whole of society; no less obvious, despite all the talk about the resurgence of democracy, much of the repressive apparatus is still in place. Argentine society will not resume its rate of growth for several years, until we somehow create very different expectations than those predominant today. In other words, I would not worry too much about society's not resuming its rate of expansion and accumulation if we could reasonably attain an equitable distribution of the weight of the external debt. Obviously, if we insist on a formula where a good part of the debt payment must stem from contraction and unemployment, that will not generate internal stability, and this is more important than to resume the rate of accumulation."

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MACHINEA: "I do not agree with Katz's last statements. The theme of equity is central. Yet, the problem Argentina faces is how to accumulate capital in order to make the distribution of the burden of the debt more equitable. I see no possibility of greater equity within a country that does not accumulate capital. At the current rate of investment of the economy is condemned to stagnation: it is unrealistic to think of a more equitable society, a better sharing of burdens, the capacity to generate jobs, in an economy that does not accumulate capital. Consequently, it is not relevant to discuss the theme of equity versus accumulation. The great challenge is how to accumulate with equity, and it is here that the public sector must play a role with the tax structure. But to think that it is necessary to choose and to opt for equity is to choose stagnation. The result is no generation of employment and worse income distribution in an economy which, as Frenkel said, has been stagnant for ten years. This is socially undigestable. Emphasis must be placed on both things: that is our great challenge. If it is not met, the problem of equity will, within two, three, four, or five years, be posed much more dramatically."

FRENKEL: "You are both right. But when one is speaking of a project and psychology is mentioned, the problem of accumulation would seem to be just a problem for capitalists. But in reality it is not just their problem: it is a problem for society. When Katz refers to the political climate, he is thinking of the conditions of consensus necessary for a national project where people have at least a minimal enthusiasm and believe it worth the trouble to work. But it does not automatically follow that the problem is one of the quantitative distribution of income. This is clearly the problem of distributing the debt burden. At present, just as clearly, workers are paying the debt, while assets are in the hands of the rich. Unless tax policies are changed, conditions for generating a national project will not arise. If that is not done, we will continue with a schizophrenic political position, calling on people to accumulate capital and on the other hand applying monitary policies that lay the burden of the debt more heavily on the poorest in society, all of which generates a lack of consensus and places society at the edge of violence. The climate of irritation today is the product of this schizophrenic policy, which is shared by both the government and the opposition parties. But Machinea is also right in stating that the problem must not be formulated in quantitative terms like an opposition between equity-consumption-investment, for if we consider as givens the payment of the debt and a level of consumption which satisfies no one, then certainly we are caught in a situation in which we gradually sink. The problem is: who is going to invest and with what social organization investment will be made. Machinea poses the question abstractly in mentioning the public sector. What do we mean by the public sector? What social organizations will be committed to capital accumulation? Here we must invent. Concertation, for example, would have to be seen partly in terms of the sharing of burdens, but also in terms of the problem of resuming growth, and the question of who will be the agents of capital accumulation. We must continue to create new forms of enterprises, new forms of organization of production which can arouse people's enthusiasm. In other words, the project cannot be just real salary increase, nor paying the debt for eternity: that will not arouse anyone's enthusiasm."

"I also think that equity is central, Yet, some logical leaps were made in the discussion. We must pay foreigners a part of our national income, but we should not pay it from national investments. At present, with the decline of incomes, we have stopped investing in order to maintain consumption. Furthermore, this is often an ostentatious consumption by privileged sectors at a time when billions of dollars flee the country while

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still showing up in our consumption statistics because they are produced in Agentina. We are curtailing investment to pay the external debt but we have not discovered a way to make the privileged sectors pay part of its costs. But there is more: not only do they not pay it but they benefit from the external debt because as holders of financial entitlements against the Argentine state they receive the interest which that same state pays by shifting the tax burden on the rest of society. This counterbalancing of consumption and investment must be regarded as a failure of economic policy. It is a real frustration of all attempts to place part of the costs of the foreign debt on the shoulders of privileged sectors which have resulted in decreasing investment since they cannot have others pay its costs. Perhaps any attempt to remedy this will turn out to be impossible, but efforts to make the privileged pay part of those gigantic costs cannot be abandoned — at least not when the figures of the annual flight of captital from Argentina are in the order of 3 to 5% of the gross national product.

On the other hand, the question of investment is no less important than that of the efficiency of investment. We have been speaking of the first question for many years and, of course, investment has had zero efficiency in terms of the gross product. Moreover, we have had years of very high investment with very low product growth because we undertook projects which were totally unproductive: we have highways, prestigious works that serve no purpose, and we are just finishing a project whose profitability seems at least dubious. The problem is to achieve greater investment, but also, and fundamentally, a greater efficiency of that investment. Not just that, but at the same time there must still be fields where we can make better use of our productivity capacity, with relatively low investments and relatively strong results. In this sense, there is a central point in regard to investment and distributive equity: education. The country ought to make a major effort here in order to shape the human capital for the future, i.e., forming the indispensable cadres for any development policy. This results in distributive equity and social consequences that cannot be ignored. It is, after all, a kind of investment we never speak of, for we always end up focusing on "hardware" which we do not always know how to use efficiently."

KATZ: "Until now the whole discussion suggests that there is an institution that can do this in a different way if given a reasonable "blueprint" of what to do. This is a false image of what the state is, and of its role in society. In turn, it is hard to conceive either of the two major parties of Argentina — one in the government, and the other in opposition but eventually governing — being described differently. If radicalism refers only to the policies being currently implemented, this is not by chance, nor because it lacks ideas, but rather because the state has not managed to differentiate itself from the rest of civil society. Civil society — at least the sector of civil society that has access to those resources — lives a schizophrenic life of growth while transferring its resources abroad. The state adopts attitudes no less schizophrenic when it says it is trying to make reforms and actually places no importance on changing social organization. All of which leads me to question the seriousness of our attitude if we act as if we believe in the existence of a being outside the social structure which can represent the national interest. None exists. Nor will spectacular changes take place in the composition or the role of public power in Argentina. The country will continue drifting more or less in the same direction as it has in recent years. That is why I share Machinea's view that accumulation and consumption must not be regarded as antinomic. In Argentina's domestic reality they are antinomic, and will continue to be so, because

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there is no outside entity that will develop a "blueprint" indicating how to accumulate reasonably: in all probability, the country will continue without capital accumulation and with disproportionate consumption by the high-income sectors — who will continue to transfer their assets abroad — unless, of course, there are very serious changes. And this does not seem likely. In other words, I do not deny the need for accumulation and consumption to grow jointly, but no one, including the state, is really interested in being changed."

MACHINEA: "I agree with much of what Katz says. However, he ends by proposing that we simply give up. Clearly, this society cannot be repaired with just two or three shifts in economic policy. The problem is much more complex. All the same, to think that we can do nothing, that we cannot accumulate capital, that it is better for us to consume what we have and that in ten years God will provide a solution — that too is not something one can plan. Perhaps, in the end that is what will happen, considering the social conflicts and the impossibility of starting the kind of process I mentioned. But if it is proposed that we continue consuming what we have and that the problem of accumulation is secondary, it seems to me that by that route all, especially wage-earners, will be much worse off in three or four years.

On the other hand, we should not fall back into voluntarism and say that what is needed is to increase the efficiency of investment more than to accumulate capital. Both must be done: obviously, the public sector cannot undertake Pharaonic works; but with 12% of the gross national product in investments, however efficiently we assign it, we will hardly succeed in replacing the 'stock' of capital. Only in the world of fantasy can it be thought that with 12% we accumulate sufficiently and only in fantasy can we convert the state into a magnificent scientist who does everything perfectly.

I want to change the subject. I agree about the distribution of income in terms of tax policy: that is where an effort must be made to take away consumption from the higher income sectors — especially those sectors which were able to accumulate foreign assets during these six or seven years. That is not going to be an easy task, but that is the direction to take. From this point of view, income distribution and capital accumulation are not incompatible. As for exports, this is not a question of the trade cycle, but involves a project of capital accumulation. Unless we convince Argentine capitalists that capital accumulation is a permanent project and that they are going to profit from it, they will not invest. I am not speaking here of exports to pay the debt. There are two ways of continuing to transfer resources abroad: by increasing exports or by lowering imports. If we only export and fail to grow, that serves no purpose: it generates foreign currency to pay the banks who are the only beneficiaries of this strategy. In the end, it is not a matter of transferring more resources abroad but of having more exports to be able also to import more, since to increase investment we will need to increase imports. The other strategy is to pay the debt without growing. A recent book on the subject of public investment speaks of it, at least in the short run, as something needed to get the economy moving again. The psychology necessary does not appear suddenly. But if the private sector cannot be convinced to accumulate, in the long run, the public sector can be seen as a motor of growth."

KATZ: "I do not mean to sound like a nihilist, but we should look at this realistically. Some of us know how the state apparatus functions and in the last year we have had to

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confront the difficulties involved in realizing a selective economic policy. Argentina needs to grow and the current situation requires an enormous selective capacity within the public apparatus to target what there is to accumulate. And there is no institutional organization and no reasonable separation between the public apparatus governing society and respect for community interests, which could guarantee that this can exist. Given that the country is investing in Pharaonic works and absurd projects, despite the potential of natural resources like gas, I ask myself: Where on earth is this bureaucratic apparatus' capacity to restrain that type of works and to undertake a transformation process seeking to supply a natural resource? I find only one answer: nowhere. I admit that investment must be relaunched, but how? The public apparatus does not seem able to do it. It is not a matter of nihilism. I agree with Schvarzer that a beginning must be made cautiously, and people outside the public apparatus should try to collaborate. But this implies a concept of the state's role in society and of how much flexibility there is."

FRENKEL: "In my opinion, it would have been better to try to strengthen civil society. During the last years Argentina has suffered great losses, and one of the greatest is the lack of a project that could generate enthusiasm. Since the devastation of civil society all that was left were bitter pessimists, some of whom invest their capital in the international market, and the others accumulate something else: irritation. Here we need also mention the near absence of political parties since neither Peronism nor radicalism are equal to the task. From 1974-1975 to now, there has been a process of systematic destruction not only of the productive capacity but also of social realtions. Therefore, we face a heroic task: to reconstruct the nation. The military dictatorship was successful in one sense: it ended by destroying the whole idea of the nation — an idea which goes hand in hand with its economic counterpart. In view of the absence of any project, with the difficulties that entails, intellectuals have a role to play. It goes beyond indicating where investments must be made or what the best system of relative prices is or what technical means could improve the situation. Our task is to try to make civil society aware of the situation. Katz's reference to violence is a prognosis projecting current tendencies as long as there is no consensual project. The empty rhetoric of democracy is not enough to provide Argentina with any objective. In a democracy the majority wins, and the poor are the majority. If that is the case, a project must be devised to win the support of the majority of the population: and that is what neither of the two major parties has yet achieved. Clearly, there is no consensus for sending 6% of the gross product abroad, and what we call distributive outbidding is each sector's attempt to pass the burden of paying the interest on this debt to other social sectors. Nor, however, does the government raise the question of whether we are forced by the international situation to send that percentage abroad: its language seems to imply that the whole situation is solved by signing with the Fund and settling with the banks, when in reality what is being done is to facilitate this shipment of income. Such being the case, people are reaching the limits of madness and the democratic state is beginning to lose credibility, thus permitting some messianic, fascist, violent project to take root — such as that which is brewing from the extreme right. The climate is ripe for that, except that for the moment we are immunized by the terrible years of violence which we have had to endure."

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# THE TRIUMPH OF THE ENTREPRENEUR*

## by Paul Thibaud

When she was interviewed by Bernard Pivot, Marguerite Duras professed to be a "Mitterrandist" — not a socialist and she added: "Before '81 we were undergoing the crisis, now we are thinking about it." True, the socialist government now admits its perplexity and the emptiness of its ideology. There is, as it were, a pause for breath, an attempt to conceptualize not exactly the "crisis " a catch-all word, but the sort of journey toward an unknown shore. The change of political values obliges politicians and journalists to do and proclaim the opposite of their former creed.

It would be a mistake to see the new mode of the "entrepreneur" (a word which seems to capture the new state of mind) as just a snobism of former leftists in anticipation of their future victories or as the delirium of irresponsible right-wing ideologues. Those who feign to master these changes were not their originators. The ideological ground itself is in motion; it is the things themselves that instruct us, not just material events (irrepressible unemployment and its results), but mental drifts, unforeseen conclusions to which we are led, previously self-evident claims which suddenly can no longer be advocated: that the economy, for instance, is just a set of means at the service of society. The matter has become much more complicated, as the simplistic proposed panaceas show in their own way.[1] They are defenses against worry. Of course, one must be better informed than ever before on what changes and what causes this to change. Rather than dwelling once again on the socialists' disappointments and reversals, let us try to see what is behind it all.

*Two Landmarks*

Two classical works have succeeded in understanding the period of Western history now coming to a close. That period was unified in the belief that the Keynesian state could control the economy, that unemployment would be overcome, that free health care, a comfortable retirement, even promotion, were among the "social rights."

Karl Polyani's *The Great Transformation*[2] explains the rise and fall of the market economy from the 18th century to the 1930s. Polyani's thesis is that the "self-regulated economy destroys the human and natural substance of society." Against the classics (e.g., Adam Smith), he argues that the market economy has nothing spontaneously human about it; that the English people, as the first to experience its rigors, came close to perishing; that in England the labor movement, after royalty and aristocracy (the Poor Laws), was society's protector against savage competiton. This is not to say that the market does not have its legitimacy. Insofar as it assures "the freedom of the consumer," it makes possible the adaptation of production. But neither work nor the earth, nor money could be abandoned to its laws. When they are, we enter the "market economy," which destroys the "human habitat." The entire history of the 19th century

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1. "In Great Britain, Harris of High Cross sets the pace for a liberal political pedagogy by disposing of numerous legislative bills in the House of Lords, bills whose text rarely exceeds three lines and which are satisfied with abolishing existing regulations, being very careful not to 'reform' them." (Guy Sorman, *La solution liberale*, Fayard, 1984, p. 270). From which it follows that the art of governing consists in one single word: deregulation.

2. Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation*, (Beacon Press, 1957) (1st ed., 1944).



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(particularly since the 1880s) is an effort, based on political democracy, to make "the economic system stop imposing its law on society and to assure the primacy of society over this system." The rejection of the gold standard by all major countries, between 1931 and 1936, consolidates this emancipation; governments assume control of the economy.

In another classical book,[3] which appeared two years before *The Great Transformation*, Joseph Schumpeter analyzed the same evolution as Polanyi, though from an opposite, conservative, point of view. To him, capitalism seemed essentially doomed for two reasons: First, the decline of the function of the entrepreneur. In large corporate capitalism "innovation itself is in the process of being reduced to routine" and management is bureaucratized, which causes it to loose its specificity at the same time it loses its legitimacy. Secondly, capitalism cannot outlive democracy. The capitalists have no political ability and were only able to prosper within a framework dominated by the aristocracy. As a "calculatory" class, capitalists are incapable of moving the "extra-rational motive forces" which every leading class must know how to mobilize. They do not know how to arouse an "irrational attachment to the social order" (p. 197). That is why their power cannot outlive the political preeminence of the aristocracy which served as a "protective cushion" for capitalism.

These two funeral orations of capitalism come to the same conclusion concerning the incompatibility between capitalism and democracy. The incompatibility was moral for Polanyi: "Socialism is essentially the inherent tendency of industrial civilization which wants to surmount the self-regulated market and subject it to democratic society." It was psycho-political for Schumpeter, who argued that capitalism is condemned both for the wrong reasons (it cannot assure a lasting prosperity) and for correct ones (it does not know how to touch imaginations and win a political base). Moreover, for these two authors who wrote under the New Deal and were confronted with the rise of labor parties, this overturning is more likely to be a progressive "denaturation" — indeed, for Polanyi, a surpassing — rather than a brutal overthrow.

These prognostications have, for decades, seemed to describe an evolution that formed part of the nature of things; the progressive bureaucratization and humanization of the economy under the pressure of unionism and political democracy, under the effect of concentration and government-implemented growth policies. Galbraith observed the same tendencies in *The New Industrial State*[4] (1967).

The resurgence of violence in the market, which the Keynesian state thought it had brought under control, the re-canibalization of society by economics, can conceivably be explained by the intensification of international trade. Capitalism, which was installed and civilized in the Atlantic zone, is forced to rediscover its first virulence (or perish) under the pressure of competition from the new industrial economies of the Pacific zone. One may ask, however, why the intrusion of this competition did not trigger a serious call for protectionism as (Polanyi insists) was the case in the 1880s or, more recently, in the 1930s, to protect European agricultures from those of the "new countries." This time the reflex of protectionism did not work. Instead rhetoric favoring competition, the imperative of the "opening," of the challenge to be met, the obsession with the chilling decline, fill the media. These themes must find an echo since other voices are barely heard and the political debate on this subject has not even begun. If there is some protectionism, it is reluctant in character — as in the case of

3. Joseph Schumpeter, *Camitalisme, socialisme et domocratie*, (Payot, 1951, republished 1983).
4. J.K. Galbraith, *Le nouvel Etat industriel*, (Gallimard, 1968).

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France's restrictions on the import of Japanese video equipment. No country openly boasts of protecting itself; the theme of autarchy, which knew its hour of glory in the 1930s, henceforth gives an impression of archaism and lack of culture.

If it seems necessary for all to accept the "world challenge," this choice can be explained only by reference to a change of political values which has occurred in the Western world. It is a surprising choice as it leads one to accept as natural and even necessary the return to "scourges" such as unemployment, which had been effectively denounced and combated by all established policies for decades. Yet, it is strange to see so many nations renounce such precious acquisitions so easily.

*From One Individualism to the Other*

The era we are leaving behind, which had claimed to establish the "primacy of society" over the marketplace, and had sanctified social rights, was, in the broad sense of the word, the era of social democracy.

In terms of collective beliefs, social democracy presents itself as the project for a society organized for the good and the liberty of the individual. It is, if one wishes, a collectivism in social relations, which are and must remain organized, but a collectivism for the individual who himself remains free of its values. This is, no doubt, how Jaurès' dictum must be understood: "Socialism is an individualism rightly understood." Social democracy is, in this regard, symmetrically opposed to the traditionalism of the right, in which the individual is constrained (he has collective mores and ethics to preserve), while social relations remain free. Quite consistently, social democracy tends to see social relations only in terms of rights. If society is organized for the individual, it is rights that define the latter socially, that circumscribe his space: his wage, his leisure, his autonomy. The rights define individual autonomy: society is a structuring of rights. As for ethics, it is each person's private business; that is why permissiveness and pluralism accompany collective organization.

We are no doubt witnessing in many Western countries an ever more drastic crisis of the social democratic ideal, of the providential State, and this crisis explains the reversal of outlooks. This crisis is perhaps nothing but the reflection of the difficulty of attempting to reconcile social democratic individualism and instrumental collectivism. In practice, the welfare state turns out to be less neutral and functional than it claims. As the Swedish example proves, its development does not go without a certain conformist pressure. In fact, it cannot tolerate all life-styles without reducing its profits. The questions posed by marginality, by the critiques of social engineering, and, more generally, by the denunciation of the experts' claim to know best what is human, have given a bad name to the utopia of a liberty made possible by the exhaustive regulation of interpersonal relations. These questions illuminated the human cost of a regulation claiming to be perfectly neutral.

Touraine has often described the social democratic model under the name of post-industrial or the programmed society: a society increasingly cut off from tradition, which no longer produces primarily material goods, but life-styles, values, needs, representations. In this society, where the State manages economic and cultural life ever more directly, it is no longer capitalists and workers who confront each other, but technocrats and consumers: those who create models and those who must conform to them. The social movements of the 1970s, of which Touraine became the interpreter — the womens' movement, ecologists, regionalists — expressed, contrary to the general programming, peoples' desire to retain control of their own life. Today these movements, while having succeeded in part, have mostly disappeared. They have suc-

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ceeded insofar as they wanted to destroy what organized welfare still carried of residual traditionalism (i.e., definitions of normal conduct); they likewise succeeded in rendering the functioning of welfare society more pliant and also in accelerating its crisis by presenting it with new demands (e.g., the failure of social action vis-à-vis marginal behavior, particularly drugs). However, they failed to conceive alternative social projects: that is why they dissolved into the permissiveness to whose creation they constributed. They did not manage to transform the social democratic model but only to precipitate its crisis by exploding its excessive claims.

In short, the 1968 critique of the social democratic model, after having dissipated in absolute and untenable libertarian protests, produced an individualist, hedonist, narcissistic behavior often described as the culmination of the ruin of collectively recognized transcendental dimensions inherent in democratic societies. All that remains of social democracy, if one removes its missionary ideal, the slightly naive project of a healthy society, is the individual pursuing his little private adventure, navigating among all the possibilities offered by a rich society.[5]

Certain American authors, more or less obsessed with neo-conservatism,[6] have regarded the individualist retreat in which the crisis of the welfare state culminates as a fatal phenomenon both for capitalism and for democracy. The culture of irresponsibility, the boundless development of all sorts of expectations in a society without standards, will necessarily play into the hands of messianic demagogues. Lipovetsky has challanged this prognosis by showing that once the battle against "puritan and utilitarian values" had been won, individual hedonism ceased to be revolutionary, romantic, exalted, surrealist, but became prudent and conscious of what is possible. It became anxious to play in the margins and not to overturn or even to defy what it knew so well how to profit from. Moreover, this current coincided with the final crisis of messianic political ideologies, with the result that hedonism, which could no longer be seduced by grandiose promises, had to settle for calculating and developing the many opportunities it could find in society as it is.

Consumer individualism has often been described as causing uniformity and conformism: the "society of sheep" of the 1968 posters. Advertising agencies and fashionable newspapers have changed this image. Consumption is henceforth less a sacrosanct status than it is adventure, the art of seizing opportunities, the pleasure of running around in a jungle where there is something for every taste and every wallet, where inequality is disguised under variety.

Along with calculation, the enterprising spirit has made a comeback. From an entrepreneur of one's own pleasure, one can become an entrepreneur as such. This disproves, at least in part, Bell's thesis concerning the contradiction of capitalist culture: that it is puritanical and disciplinarian on the side of production, pleasure-seeking and seductive on the side of consumption. Between pleasure-seeking individualism and enterprising individualism, there will henceforth be less contradiction than solidarity; and the passage from one attitude to the other is smooth. So this individualism, denounced as impracticable, ends up by finding in itself a kind of salvation, instilling civic prudence and a spirit of initiative.

The enterprising spirit, which Schumpeter saw as the essence of capitalism, but whose unpopularity he deplored, seems at long last to have found a cultural echo and a true mass basis of unforeseen but more promising origin. This basis is less narrow

5. Cf. Gilles Lipovetsky, *L'ere du vide*, (Gallimard, 1983).
6. Cf. Daniel Bell, *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism* (New York: Basic Books, 1976).

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culturally, less shrill, more sure of itself perhaps than the little shopkeepers formerly were; it is based on a young and seductive mass.

This is at least a partial reversal of individualism, which changes from passive to active, and which coincides with — if it does not cause — a new style of production. As needs and life-styles are differentiated, production becomes more diversified and mobile. The sense of commerce, of sale, of conception — especially the anticipation of new needs — the fact of being attuned to a nascent social mood become opportunities as much as technology and organization. Whether illusion or reality, this aspect accounts for business' attractiveness: every day we are told the story of someone who, "starting with nothing," had the genius to discover in his contemporaries the "latent need" of an object or a service which, in our routineness, we would not have imagined.

This emergence of freedom and initiative onto the first level of democratic values explains why the internationalization of the economy is taken up in the currents that dominate opinion both as a challenge and as a constraint that must be removed. There is even a feeling of remorse for having, in previous decades, neglected some fundamental obligations — whence the fear of decadence.

This rehabilitation of enterprise — "habilitation," we ought to say, if it is true, as Schumpeter says, that the entrepreneur has hitherto always been unpopular, cut off from the common culture — this great return to the market, i.e., in the opposite direction for Polanyi's "transformation," is activated by the crisis. For it becomes evident that the whole complex of social rights from which we benefit is linked to enterprise. But this very dependence could provoke rancor; after all, workers might demand that their destiny not be risked in hazardous competition with the Japanese, and that this exorbitant right and responsibility be taken away from employers. If this is not the dominant tendency, it is no doubt because business has become fundamentally legitimate in our so-called post-industrial society, because it represents and implements a cardinal value that appears to be the materialization of freedom, i.e., innovation. Innovation makes visible the difference of nature between Western societies devoted to "democratic invention" and (Lefort) societies which are impeded by dogmatism or tradition.

*From Action to Ethics*

Coming back to social democracy, one sees more clearly that the weakness of its vision is its difficulty in recognizing the inevitable heights and dangers of action. For its utopia is that of an action that would do no harm to anyone and at the same time a society which would guarantee to everyone what is vitally necessary. It has had to backtrack in both directions. Leaving aside affective needs — of which only Fourier could imagine a society capable of satisfying[7] — it is evident, for example, that the right to work can be definitively guaranteed only in places where work is of no importance, i.e., in barracks or camps. There is true work only for him to whom someone (employer or client) says: "I need you." The right to subsist can be guaranteed by a distribution of revenues; the right to work is, on the contrary, an impossibility, as long as the idea of enterprise retains any meaning. For one can no more guarantee to an employee a healthy business than to a soldier a victorious army. In practice, the

7. Though we may wonder about the "anti-spanking" legislation in Sweden, it is impossible to legally force parents to love their children. The most one can do is correct the insupportable arbitrariness that places the latter at the mercy of the former. As if the risk of violence were not a part of the family situation, as if one could interpret the family according to a symmetrical system of rights and guarantees.

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guarantee of employment is linked with the Keynesian thesis which affirms the State's capacity to regulate the economy. It falls when this thesis is cast into doubt.[8]

The "right to work" amounted to guaranteeing an adequate level of economic success. This confuses the collective objective and the right of the individual; it denies the inevitable uncertainty of action. Reciprocally, there is in social democratic ideology a tendency to deny the element of violence that is inseparable from all action. From this point of view, the ecological movement is typical; it has brought the social democratic model into a crisis by emphasizing some of its presuppositions, specifically that of an action that would do harm to no one. It has constantly and legitimately stressed the acquired rights or the future possibilities which certain collective actions threatened. But everyone sees that in the last resort if all these objections are taken literally, it would be impossible to do anything; one could build or operate no factory, no university, no new city: there is always a movement in the sector to symbolize injured life.[9] To act is necessarily to destroy and to construct. It is important to know whether one does it justly and according to legal procedures, but to seek to offend no one is to advocate inaction. To the extent that it is based on a presupposition of this kind, the ecological movement relies on the same bases as the post-war economism of euphoric growth; economic development too claimed to be an integrally and uniformly good action. Ecologism merely shows the weak foundation of the economy's claim, while asserting a similar one for itself.

The current relegitimation of enterprise by leftist economists can be understood in contrast with the dream of innocent action which we have just summarily outlined, both as risky action and as partial action.[10] Two authors[11] seem to me to present important ideas on this subject: "Socialism . . . would imply a dwindling of enterprise as such because the organic cooperation of activities would be so extensive that it could be mastered only by the entire society." It is doubtful whether the idea of an economic action conducted by "all of society" is politically conceivable; these authors, at any rate, evoke it only to reject it and, referring to Schumpeter, focus on the currently irreducible role of the businessmen, that of arousing "creative impulses for society," a role which "can be assumed only by individuals or limited groups of individuals who mobilize for society what there is of the best in themselves" (pp. 236-237).

The "come back" of the enterprise and the entrepeneur is evidently loaded with all kinds of consequences. I will mention just three:

1) All theories that claim to include economics within society, to make production a function which the collectivity could control integrally and employ as a means, neglect the creative value of enterprise and innovation. By this fact, they are completely at odds with the liveliest core of the spirit of the times. This is the case with dogmatically conceived self-management and ecologism. On the contrary, from a certain point of view, it is society that seems to be included in economics. That is the Japanese lesson: productivity is not that of an isolated enterprise, it is to an extent that of society as a whole.

8. On this point, cf. Daniel Cohen's analysis in *Telos*, n. 63 (Spring 1985).

9. The peace movement, in cultural solidarity with the social democracies, obviously transposes the principle of innocuousness to the military-strategic domain, where its incompatibility with any action whatsoever is even more brutally striking.

10. To say that an action is necessarily partial and that it necessarily entails an element of violence is to make two equivalent statements. For an action to be guaranteed to be integrally good, it would have to be able to be done in the name of all humanity.

11. Michel Aglietta and Anton Brender, *Les metamorphoses de la societé salariale*, (PUF, 1984).

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2) If currently, for reasons which are not purely conjectural, the economy seems like the encompassng, dominant factor, this does not imply the end of the welfare state. The welfare state merely finds itself deprived of its utopia, of its claim to realize social rationality. It is even evident that the new spirit of enterprise develops on the basis of guarantees made by the welfare state. The new relations between the economy and society will not be defined — as certain unaware demagogues claim — by returning to wildcat capitalism, but rather by developing policies that integrate society into the economy, policies of mobilization,[12] integration, negotiation, which increasingly involve non-management groups in the functioning of the economy.

But if society is better integrated into the economy, i.e., is more dependent on business and its success, there is the danger of a divergence of statuses, of the dual society formerly denounced by the left. How can this polarization be avoided? If the economy, which is the principle foundation of our society, has as its principle the recognition of the usefulness of others, how can the recognized forms of usefulness, and the chances to make each person's known, be multiplied? If less is demanded of the redistribution of products, more attention must be paid to the redistribution of the chances for action.

3) The return, via the economy, of a theory of action is impossible without the return of the problem to ethics, not just individual but collective ethics. The problems which were believed to be solved by law reappear in ethics. For example, it is not because there is no "right to work" that those responsible in all spheres do not have the *moral obligation* to enact policies of full employment. The recognition of the precarious functioning of business poses, on the contrary, the central question of the moment: that of those who are marginalized, i.e., all kinds of persons who are declared useless, whom the hard-pressed welfare state leaves in the dirt and for whom other policies must be conceived.

12. On the overturning of perspectives, cf. Daniel Mothé's article, "Pour le conflit ou par le consensus?" in *Esprit*, Dec. 1983.

# THE INTELLECTUAL AND THE DIPLOMAT*

## by Nicole Gnesotto

We of course knew it: war is not a subject of interest in France. When Yves Montand appeared on the TV to speak about its seriousness[1] . . . the French no longer loved Yves Montand. It's just that simple. This popular consensus on the insignificance of war is equalled only by the inverse consensus among the elite about its importance. Especially for the left intellectuals, strategy has become the "in" theme; international affairs are taken seriously, diplomacy is domesticated.

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1. Montand, formerly a close camp-follower of the CP, has spoken out increasingly as an "anti-totalitarian" including a TV show highly praised by intellectuals. Tr. note.

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This is first explicable in terms of domestic politics. When the left came to power in 1981, it put the secondary school teacher on the throne but left the intellectual without a place. Mitterrand's press speaker Max Gallo made an attempt in *Le Monde* to get them to join, but without success.[2] The intellectuals were willing to be the consellors to the Prince (more often, in fact, the friends of the friends of the Prince); but they did not want to serve publicly . . . nor did they want to criticize, for that appeared to be treasonous just as approval seemed unworthy. Foreign policy thus permitted them an outlet: the conflict of left and right was relegated to the parties, while the conflict East/West could be used to make the intellectual the herald of democracy, someone above partisan interests and political calculations, concerned only with the universal. Here there is no place for nuances and compromises: one chooses one's camp. The left intellectuals thus were depoliticized concerning domestic politics while being ideologized in the international sphere. And there was a bonus: diplomacy is less dirty than exercising power; and at the same time, it unifies much more. It is the privileged sphere of national consensus, the discussion of which is free of all concerns of political partisanship. It is like the *"état de grâce"* when Mitterrand was elected; and one can imagine that it may embody a future domestic consensus. One is not the servant of the Prince, but a defender of the West; if the Elysée palace has the same positions, so much the worse . . . or rather, so much the better.

After 1981, the intellectuals thus involved themselves with foreign policy — which in the Vth Republic is the private preserve of the President — and transformed domestic politics into the private preserve of the socialists, and particularly their leader. Sometimes there were happy coincidences: Mitterrand defended Sakharov in the Kremlin while Glucksmann defended the Pershings in Berlin. The rights of man and democracy moralise the international arena and reintroduce principles where the presidency of Giscard d'Estaing had a tendency to see only commerce . . . which is to say, nearly nothing.

If the socialists in power in 1981 justify, to some extent, the conversion of the intellectuals to diplomacy, at the same time the internal development of the French left explains the fact that for the first time a French anti-totalitarian President appeared in Moscow. Antitotalitarianism in France was first of all an admission of debts: to History, to other nations, to the individual; likewise, it was seen to be independent from ideology, systems, masses. Truth, the boat people, or East-European samizdat. For quite a while France has invented nothing but has learned from elsewhere.[3] The result has been that a large part of the antitotalitarian movement has rediscovered the virtues of the modesty of pragmatism: a ship for Vietnam, a truck for Poland, a doctor for Africa. The rights of man in short are not the foundation of a politics. Rather, they demand that one act, urgently.

At the same time, the rights of man recreate the abstraction which is familiar to the intellectual. The dissident, the refugee are not simple biological entities to be saved from the camps, from hunger, from psychiatric internment. They express a reference to The Charter of the Rights of Man, Helsinki, respect for international law. In his isolation the dissident moralizes the international drama and the Realpolitik of the states. In his smallness, he expresses the universal. He is the fracture in a system and

2. See the debates in the French press during the summer of 1982 after the Gallo article, "Pourquoi les intellectuals," was published. Tr. note.

3. With much delay, one should add. See the remarkable study by Pierre Grémion, *Paris-Prague (Paris: Julliard, 1985). (Grémion's is a study of the reactions of the French Left to the developments in Czechoslovakia between 1968 and 1978. Tr. note).*

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the memory — or the future — of another: totalitarianism against democracy. Thus, in Paris, one rediscovers Hannah Arendt and Tocqueville; the Good and the Bad.[4] Soon, antitotalitarianism will mean the apology for the two most extreme forms of democracy — from the smallest to the largest: the dissident and the West.

The move from the defense of the rights of man to the defense of the West was logical; it only required circumstances to be realized. The invasion of Afghanistan by the Red Army in December of 1979 suddenly raised a threat which thrust Europe into the forgotten precariousness of History. Less than two years later, the pacifist movement in Germany swept away two decades of French amnesia concerning Germany as well as forty years of tranquillity in Europe. History no longer takes place only beyond our boarders; Western Europe no longer represents that finally attained situation where one could theorise about the development of others. The change from a concern with antitotalitarianism to a preoccupation with strategy is thus the same phenomenon as the rediscovery of European history (first of the East, then of the West) which has been carried out by French intellectuals.

But the idea Europe did not, in France, originate from the left. The antitotalitarian movement of course learned a cultural lesson from the East concerning European civilization. But the political construction of Europe, the definition of an *Ostpolitik,* remained the task of bureaucrats and diplomats. European pacificism, — especially that of the Germans — reintroduced the European question into France; or rather, a part of the question: the responsibility of the democratic states of the West concerning the civil societies of the East. The German pacifists and the French non-pacifists each gave different answers: détente or defense. The other part of the question, that of the identity of Europe within the Western world, remains a question posed by the pacifists via their anti-Reaganism. In France, antitotalitarianism does not make it possible to think of the nature of Europe; it tends, rather, to block any distinction between the two shores of the Atlantic. Indeed, it is to avoid any distinction that an undifferentiated concept of Europe sometimes appears useful: it is a concept formulated to deny the possiblity of American abandonment, and German withdrawal.

If the question of Europe remains confused in the strategic arguments of the French left, there is, on the other hand, a consensus concerning the meaning and the moral of history. The German antinuclear movement is said to substitute the biological for the political, the immediate for the potential, technology for ideology: in a word, the bomb is a threat to life. But the French philosophize just as much: oppression threatens freedom; an absolute defense must be opposed to an absolute terror. The pronuclear unanimity is thus at its height and the arguments that justify it are the most extreme — a curious mixture of political moralism and of pragmatism: nuclear weapons deter the Gulag; it's moral because it works. But in this there is no longer any reflection on the crisis of deterrence.

In other words, the European historicity which the strategy of the French intellectuals discovers and confronts stops at its borders. Others in Europe are its actors: the Poles of Solidarnosc, the German pacifists. France, on the other hand, remains outside history: the streets are calm, debate minimal, the consensus on deterrence spectacular; the intellectuals talk to the Germans and the French talk of other things. For France itself is outside of history: twenty years ago, DeGaulle took care of the question of independence, and the French nuclear development transformed the nation into an

4. C.f., Pierre Hassner, "Le totalitarisme vu de l'Oeust," in *Totalitarismes* (Paris: Economica, 1985).

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international power. Once this is accepted, the official diplomatic language can cultivate abstractions: the *Grand Pays* has a mission (for example in North/South relations) or a destiny (Europe). The intellectuals preach sermons to their neighbors in the name of the universal while they are concerned with nationalist resurgences. Nuclear weapons have replaced the colonies in the national conscience and deterrence is doubly agreed upon: it is an eternal threat — whoever attacks France sets off the end of the world, so let's endure together. And it is what remains of our power at the moment when economic relations force us into dependence, even into decline. To question nuclear weapons appears thus to weaken France itself.

After the worrying about the pacifists, however, one must worry about America. In March, 1983, Reagan's speech on "star wars" announced the coming of a world "freed from the nuclear threat." This threatens to put into question deterrence and technology which, in turn threatens Europe. The pacifist movement is coopted by the former American enemy and languishes at the moment. For its part, the French antitotalitarian movement has hardly been used to looking at conditions in the West. As a result, for the past year, the questions of strategy have again become a dialogue among experts.[5]

Or, nearly a dialogue among experts. From 1981 to 1983, the threat was military and soviet and the issue was political and German. On the left, antitotalitarianism easily found its place. In 1985 the challenge is technological and American, and the issue is European. Gaullism will have to reappear against Washington. The Gaullist version of left politics specifies a strong France within a neutralized Europe.[6] Its European version is still a blank page. The most probable outcome reamins the most disappointing: that France will satisfy itself, once again, with being the Great Trustee of Europe's future.

5. See also Pierre Lellouche, *L'avenir de la guerre* (Paris: Mazarine, 1985). Tr. note.
6. Régis Debray, *Les Empires contre l'Europe* (Paris: Gallimard, 1985).

## RAMBO: FROM COUNTER-CULTURE TO CONTRA

### by Russell A. Berman

In an era where bad film stars become reactionary politicians, political films which are equally bad may be something we will just have to live with. So after the Nicaraguan occupation of Smallville in *Red Dawn,* Ricky goes to Vietnam in *Rambo.* This box office hit of the summer appears to confirm all the claims of leftist criticism regarding the ideology of Reaganism. Above all, it represents the revisionist history of the Vietnam War, won on the battlefield but lost by politicians who capitulated to the totalitarian pawns of Moscow, who in turn continue to imprison and torture unnumbered POW's, the ten lost tribes of the far right. But that is just the beginning, for the film is also an unadulterated expression of military machismo. Only Rambo, Sylvester Stallone with his body by Nautilus, can rescue his beleaguered comrades, and he can only do so as a lone hero, single-handedly overpowering hordes of Vietnamese soldiers and a major

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contingent of the Red Army. A pure specimen of the strong silent type, he barely mutters a word and shows nary a sign of differentiated emotions. The one fond embrace he grants his female sidekick is no exception, for she is immediately shot by the forces of evil, saving our hero from the complications of a relationship that might require speech: real men don't make commitments. But this is all for the good, since he is white and she is Asian and miscegenation is no high priority for the moral majority. The racism of the film extends to the depiction of both the Vietnamese villagers, passive, inscrutable, caricatured, and the Vietnamese soldiers, who apparently do not even know how to aim an AK47. Just no match for our Rambo who never misses.

This sort of ideology criticism of the film could be expanded, but the point is clear and comes close to a tautology: the reactionary film is reactionary, militarist, macho and racist. It is symptomatic of political representation in the era of Reagan, who, as is well known, has given his seal of approval to the film. Or at least it is indicative of reactionary ideology as viewed from a standard leftist perspective. Yet that perspective, which restricts itself to locating representations of militarism, sexism, and racism, misses some of the crucial features in the film that are indicative of the specific character of contemporary culture and politics. These features include the thematic discussion of bureaucracy, the vicissitudes of the counter-culture and the role of the mass media. All of these issues are much more open to investigation from the standpoint of critical theory and artificial negativity than from standard leftism. In fact, standard leftist cultural criticism is particularly incapable of a critique because it is itself implicated in aspect of the Rambo reaction. Nor does it manage to go beyond an abstract denunciation of a bad film as bad, while the real critical challenge remains an explanation of the film's appeal. For these reasons, the discussion of Rambo can provide an opportunity to indicate alternative critical understandings of the current situation.

It is insufficient to criticize the racist representation of the enemy soldiers in terms of their general military incompetence because these images themselves derive from a specific historical tradition. The Vietnamese in *Rambo* appear in costumes reminiscent of Japanese uniforms from World War II films, just as the Russians, all blond and blue-eyed, speak with German accents. The 1985 film draws on an older anti-fascist iconography, the crude caricatures of which were once hawked by the left. But now the political polarity is reversed: our former Soviet allies look like the hated Huns, and the Vietnamese Communists turn out to be nothing but "Japs." This revision of the twentieth-century past is clearly part and parcel of the same spectacular strategy that brought Reagan to Bitburg in the spring.

More importantly, historical revisionism indicates a specific temporality in which the past is simultaneously recalled and denied. When the film commences, Rambo is doing time in prison, but his sentence is commuted when he decides to let himself be thrown into the eternal present of the Vietnamese adventure. At the close of the film, Rambo walks away saying he will live day by day. The personal experience of the new hero, liberated from the rationalized time of the Protestant ethic, is not organized into any collective historical structure, just as the appropriation of the erstwhile anti-fascist imagery constitutes a denial of national history. American patriotism, which forty years ago implied participation in the manifest destiny of a nation which itself claimed to be the destiny of the West, has undergone a thorough revision. Nationalism according to *Rambo* no longer means taking part in a collective teleology guaranteed by the state. The America for which Rambo fights is in no way associated with values deemed objective and worthwhile — democracy, freedom, civilization — as was the case in an earlier genre of war movies. One rarely sees Old Glory, and she is certainly not

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superimposed on the hero in the final scene. This transformation of reactionary representation, no longer prepared to mobilize an emphatic national identity, substantial values or traditional symbols, indicates a major shift in the mechanisms of the culture industry and hegemonic ideology. The bureaucratic welfare/warfare state formerly survived through a cultural strategy of conformism, accurately described in the *Dialectic of Enlightenment.* Clearly the current cultural and political situation is one in which mass consumerist conformism has been replaced by entrepreneurial activism as a systemic exigency, prefigured in Rambo's personal initiative. Therefore the dramatic tension of the film derives less from the conflict with the Communists — because the enemy is so incapable and Rambo is invincible, this aspect quickly loses any interest — than from the conflict between the soldier-hero and the American military bureaucracy: Rambo as the supply-side fighter.

While a standard ideology critique of the film would underscore the conflict between the American hero and his Communist adversaries, it is considerably more interesting to recognize the tension within the American camp between the front soldier and the bureaucrat. Rambo's guardian always wears a uniform, but the mission leader, Murdock, sports a business shirt in which he appears particularly unathletic. According to Murdock, the mission has been generated by political and bureaucratic, i.e., non-military, forces: Rambo is to photograph prison camps in Vietnam, which are expected to be empty, and this evidence will be used in Washington to discredit particular interest groups. One can only conclude that the ultimate goal is an attack on the belligerent lobbyists for POW's and MIA's. Unfortunately Rambo finds genuine prisoners of war, and when he manages to rescue one alive, Murdock realizes the imminent political danger and decides to abandon his agent to his fate at the hands of the Vietnamese. The narrative relies on the fundamental assumption that the political bureaucrat wants to lose and is objectively allied with the enemy, while the hero, in good sixties fashion, dares to struggle and, by the end of the film, dares to win.

Tortured by germanomorphic Russians, Rambo is forced in front of a radio microphone where he is supposed to address the American base camp and denounce himself as a war criminal. But our Rambo is no wimp; when he gets the bureaucrat on the receiving end, he issues his laconic threat: "Murdock, I'm coming to get you." It is this tension which generates the real suspense of the movie, since the subsequent escape from the clutches of his Keystone captors is little more than an exotic upgrading of a run-of-the-mill car chase. The Russians will never "get" Rambo, but Rambo has promised to "get" Murdock, and it is this *promesse de bonheur* which attracts the viewers' attention. Yet, when the conquering hero finally makes it home, pins his antagonist to a desk and raises his serrated Bowie knife high, he decides not to follow through: the knife plunges into the wood next to Murdock, and Rambo lets him off with a warning.

The film thrives less on an anti-Communist foreign policy than on a domestic anti-bureaucratic antagonism. The real enemy is the governmental machine, with its massive technology, unlimited regulations, and venal political motivations. Rambo is the anti-bureaucratic non-conformist opposed to the state, the new individualist activist. In this sense the film is an indication of a basic shift in the strategy of the culture industry which has abandoned the imagery of mass conformism and uniform identity, while replacing them with the artifical negativity of a valorized deviance from Rambo to Prince. Yet the mark of the culture industry remains evident insofar as Rambo breaks his promise: he doesn't "get" Murdock, i.e., the criticized bureaucracy survives, relegitimized by this new opposition.

Precisely this dynamic came into play when Reagan referred to Rambo in the midst

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of the Beirut hostage crisis. Unable to come up with a quick political solution, Reagan tried to appease the increasingly testy public by claiming that he had just seen the film and had seen the light: next time he would know exactly what to do. His right-wing critics could understand this statement as a promise to act like Rambo with a military solution, while in fact former actor Reagan seemed to be working as the understudy for Murdock. Bureaucratic crisis management defends itself by invoking non-bureaucratic strategies which are never carried out. The left criticizes the bellicose promise, while the right (like George Will) complains about the ineffectual practice. Neither camp recognizes the complicity: the broken promises set the stage for the practice, and the practice makes the artificial promises necessary.

Just as the images of the Vietnamese and Russian soldiers draw on a cinematic tradition, the representation of Rambo too is full of historical substance. Consider his appearance: with long hair and a headband, he wears a necklace with a good-luck bead of Oriental provenance and jumps half-naked through the rain forest with a bow and arrow. He never consumes aritificial food (Murdock drinks a soft drink from a can), quickly gets rid of the high tech weaponry with which he has been outfitted, and in a penultimate sequence he blows up the American computer. Never bowing to authority, this new soldier hero disdains uniforms. Finally, to make his identity perfectly clear, he lacks any cumbersome political ideology but rather, as he tells the one man he trusts, he is motivated solely by a desire for love. There can be no doubt about it: Rambo is the heir to the iconography of the hippies, the counter-culture turned into a contra. Critiques of the film that merely point out its obvious foreign policy implications in terms of the rewriting of the history of the Vietnam War undercut their own political relevance by missing the central issue at stake. Right-wing culture is reactionary — what else is new? — but contemporary right-wing culture as evidence in *Rambo* proceeds through the occupation of earlier left-wing material. The heritage of the sixties, the opposition to the welfare/warfare state, is turned into the neo-conservative attack on bureaucracy through a reversal of political allegiances but with a continuous set of values: the priority of individual experience, antipathy for technocracy, and a return to nature.

Both *Rambo* and its standard left critics share this counter-culture origin, which explains the weakness of the critics faced with an expression of contemporary ideology. Yet unless the metamorphosis of the bygone easy riders into imperialist adventurers is scrutinized, the specificity of the Reagan era remains misunderstood. The motor of this transformation is less political theory and ideology than an aestheticist rejection of an unappealing bureaucracy from the standpoint of immediacy, shock and beauty: Rambo is Rimbaud. The film has popular appeal because it mobilizes earlier images of emancipation, which are still recognizable as such, but then proceeds to turn them into their opposite: Benjamin's account of mass culture in reverse.

Rambo is sent off on an image-making mission: he is supposed only to photograph the prison camps, without engaging in combat. A close-up shot of his camera being loaded underscores the importance of this theme, which is repeated in a leitmotific manner throughout the film and transformed into a general matter of watching: the Vietnamese guards stand watch around the camp, Rambo peeks through the cracks in the buildings, and the Russian helicopters sweep their spotlights across the terrain. However, the heroization of the fighting hero indicates how the film is utlimately a critique of voyeurism, photographic and otherwise. Rambo decides to act, not merely to watch, just as the sex acts, seen through the slats in the prison shacks, are presented as objects of disdain. The message is an activist one: the insufficiency of merely watch-

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ing, for watching is the characteristic strategy of both the totalitarian Communists and the administrative bureaucrats.

The critique of voyeurism, which is counterposed to Rambo's independent practice, has several ramifications. Most obviously it augments the anti-bureaucratic exhortation to entrepreneurial activity. From this perspective Rambo's adventurism is simply an exotic allegory for neo-conservative individualism. In addition, the hostility toward images participates in the recuperation of the sixties, when spectacular protest relied so thoroughly on the resonance provided by the mass media; the denigration of the photographic strategy in *Rambo* translates into a condemnation of the liberal press for undermining the war effort. Therefore the film's images of burning Vietnamese soldiers refer specifically to the famous photographs of napalmed children, again with a reversal of the political valorization.

Yet a film that denounces watching and calls the legitimacy of images into question is either an example of sophisticated self-reflexive representation or a duplicitous manipulation of the public. *Rambo* is clearly not the first and most decidedly the second. Attacking photography, it asserts itself as film. Denouncing voyeurship, it relegates the viewers to spectatorship. These contradictions are telling and echo the political paradox of a critique of bureaucracy in the name of the state. The aesthetic corollary is the attack on images, photography, and the mass media in the name of the culture industry. Just as the state attempts to modernize itself through the mobilization of a vague anti-statist resentment, the contemporary culture industry thrives on the denunciation of an earlier culture industry of imposed passivity and conformism. Both political and cultural institutions try to reform themselves by engendering critiques aimed at their own expansive character.

Politics understood as the exorcism of the satanic power of the "evil empire" is not merely anti-communism. It is a desire to purge the world of sin: when Rambo enters the lush garden of the tropical forest, he overcomes the serpent, and later he rescues a comrade from crucifixion. This act of redemption conjoins with a victory over the signs of fallen nature: the law of bureaucracy and the idolatrous power of images. Yet by banishing negativity from the world, Rambo makes activity impossible, which explains the hopelessly frantic exhortations to activism in the film. Without creativity and otherness, neither the love nor community to which he appeals in his final speech can ever be found. The limit of artificial negativity is its artificiality, which is all the culture industry can offer.

## NEW TRENDS IN JAPANESE POPULAR CULTURE

### by Tetsuo Kogawa

'Popular culture' has two Japanese translations: *taishu bunka* and *minshu bunka*. *Bunka* embraces the entire concept of 'culture,' but 'popular' isn't so easily translated. *Taishu* means a large number (*tai*) of population or groups (*shu*), while *minshu* means groups

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(*shu*) of ordinary people (*min*). Thus, *minshu bunka* is a more faithful translation of 'popular culture' than *taishu bunka*. Yet, the expression *minshu bunka* does not occur as frequently as *taishu bunka*. This means that, in the Japanese context, 'popular culture' is generally regarded as 'mass culture.' Only when the difference is intentionally stressed does the term of *minshu bunka* reappear.

This is not a mere language problem but derives from the very process by which *minshu bunka* becomes *taishu bunka*. In English too, popular culture is now nothing but mass culture in the sense that traditional oral cultures are dying under the weight of overpowering mass media. Thus, I use the term 'mass culture' to express popular culture as conveyed by the mass media.

As mass media permeate into every facet of our world, the formation of mass culture means the transformation of popular culture. While popular culture presupposes various types of people and groups, mass culture transforms the original character of such entities. To the extent that the mass media create and circulate homogeneous information, they create and cultivate a homogeneous audience.

Given this, my analysis of popular culture will look more to what the Japanese call mass culture. 'Mass' connotes a coherent, homogeneously integrated matter, rather than a 'molecular' ensemble, and for this mass, modern technology is indispensable. From printing to electronics technological development has increasingly contributed to the creation of this coherent, integrated mass. In the present age of electronics, audiences transcend national boundaries. Everyone — individuals, folks and people who would otherwise maintain their 'autonomy' — is fused into one giant electronic mass culture wired into everything from refrigerators, washing machines, vacuum cleaners, stereo phonographs, radios, telephones, radio-cassetts tape-recorders and electronic calculators to computer games, vending machines, 'Walkman' radios and ghetto blasters.

All this has changed social relations in Japan no less than anywhere else. It has altered social and aesthetic values, the way people communicate, and even political consciousness. And while it is easy to see how the mass media have had an effect strong enough to change socio-cultural conditions, even electric appliances have played no small role in these changes. For instance, refrigerators (which were in 89 percent of Japanese households in 1970), washing machines (96 percent in 1972), and vacuum cleaners (91.2 percent in 1975) crastically changed housework and, consequently, traditional ways of eating, cooking, and shopping. Vending machines likewise have transformed shopping patterns and consumer attitudes.

Still, the most powerful tool of electronic mass culture is television. The first television broadcast was made in 1953. Four years later, when 34 stations had been licensed by the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications, only 5.1 percent of Japanese households had television sets. In 1964, when the 18th Olympiad were held in Tokyo, 90.3 percent of households had a black-and-white television set. Color broadcasts began in 1960, and over 90 percent of households owned a color television set as early as 1975. In 1969, over 90 percent of households had either a black-and-white or color television set.

Inevitably, people are spending more and more time watching television. In 1960, surveys showed people over the age of ten watched elevision 56 minutes each day. By 1975, that figure had grown to 3 hours and 19 minutes. Television has become such a given, it seems almost like a part of one's body. At this stage, it is ever more difficult to recognize the effects of watching it. At a level beyond consciousness, what happens on television directly becomes popular culture. In earlier days, television was a medium

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between reality and its image. When it broadcast *proresu* (American-style wrestling — one of the most popular TV programs in the 1950s), for instance, people knew that what they were watching was the televised broadcast of a real competition. The real world was considered the final referent. But today people don't even consider the reality of the referent: the question is whether the video image is real or not. The reality at issue has been reduced to something I will call *simulated reality*.

But magazines, too, contribute to this simulated reality that today plays such a large part in Japanese mass culture. One of the best illustrations of this is the recent 'Suspicious Bullet Incident.' This saga began in 1981: Miura Kazuyoshi and his wife, an upper middle-class couple, were mugged in Los Angeles. His wife was shot and eventually died. At the time, Miura repeatedly appeared on Japanese television expressing his anger and sadness. Many viewers sympthized with him. His tragedy became a national TV melodrama. However, soon after his wife died, he remarried, causing no small puzzlement among those who had followed his case. Weeklies such as *Shukan Bunshun* raised questions, but nothing came of it. All of a sudden in January 1984, *Shukan Bunshun* returned to the story, implying that Miura had killed his wife.

However, this 'Suspicious Bullet Incident' — the headline of the magazine's article — would have been an even bigger topic had television reporters rushed to Mr. Miura's house or had he been interviewed on television. Nonetheless, the magazine article was a big topic throughout 1984 and the Miura family had to leave Japan to escape it.

As this case suggests, simulated reality needs the backing of no outside authority. What appears on screen or in the popular press obtains its own reality, which is turned on and off with the mere flick of a switch. One fundamental means of imprinting this on-and-off approach to reality has been television ads. Brecht once referred to the 'V-effect' (*Verfremdungs-Effekt*) when a continuing performance would suddenly be interrupted by an unusual action. While Brecht used this technique to awaken his audience from passivity, ad spots on television are designed to relativise or bracket the very program that the 'V-effect' was supposed to activate. This anti-'V-effect' has been accelerated as TV ads have become more and more clever. As early as the mid-1970s, the better ads approached the status of film shorts in their own right, with sophisticated techniques and original ideas. The budget is usually much higher for a 20-second spot than for 30 minutes of regular soap opera. Many spots feature internationally known actors. Frequently, the ads are more interesting than the regular programs, and they enable the viewer to endure the interval been advertising.

*Joho-shi* or guides to entertainment and leisure activities like the late *Cue* or *New York Magazine*, also help organize new information channels. The most influential of these is *Pia*, which began publishing in 1973 and virtually controls the world of show business. Given the popular impression that *Pia* covers all movies, performances and other entertainments in metropolitan cities, people have become indifferent to shows not listed in it. Word-of-mouth as a means of recommending programs or activities has become extinct. This type of magazine transforms city culture into fragments of information that one can assemble according to one's preference (*konomi*). And it goes to the extreme that informational reality is substituted for the substantial reality everyone experienced in person. For instance, many readers use *johoshi* not as a guide at all, but only as a way of learning what others are doing — to the point that it becomes the basis for a Trivial-Pursuit type of pastime (*joho-asobi*).

Throughout the 1970s television and magazines popularized various sorts of parody techniques. One typical example was a TV show in which appeared *sokkurisan*

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(human imitations) of popular stars and figures, including Marilyn Monroe and John F. Kennedy. Artificiality was dominant in this period. TV ads clearly reflected this, and many of them employed visual images and quotations from famous films, especially American ones. Still, this 1970s fakery had a real-world referent from which the fake image derived. Nowadays electronic mass culture has discarded even this.

One result of this is that Western culture has been losing influence in the last decade as the Japanese have developed a self-consciousness of themselves as representing an advanced industrial country on a par with the US and as Japanese have had more and more opportunities to observe the Western world first-hand as tourists. Nowadays, there is a popular saying, '*Datsu-ou nyu-a*' which is just the reverse of *Datsu-a nyu-ou* (to disassociate from Asia to join Europe) which was the slogan of the 19th century.

Not even the Japanese National Railroad has been immune to the effects of simulated reality. Consider, for example, how it changed its ad slogan from "Discover Japan" (1970s) to "Exotic Japan" (for the 1980s). Even as late as the 1970s, there were diverse cultures in every region of Japan, especially in the north. Tour companies could find different and interesting places to take travelers. But as the tourists increased, the diversity diminished. Today, one is hard-pressed to find any differences in the cultures of the various regions, even in the northern parts of the country like Iwate or Yamagata. Instead, one finds everywhere the same vending machines, paved roads, supermarkets, commodities, and, of course, television. This is a problem for the tourism industry. Thus, it has had to create artificial differences — a simulated Japanese culture. This is the basic intention of the "Exotic Japan" campaign. The countryside *must* be exotic, but it *is* not.

*Karaoke* and Walkman belong to the electronic mass culture, too. *Karaoke* is an electronic device with tape-deck, amplifier, speaker and microphone. With it, one can record oneself singing to the accompaniment of a professional orchestra or band. In a party with *karaoke,* people sing songs one after another. Even at a conventional party, people used to sing songs, so it might seem that the appearance of *karaoke* has not changed the form of conventions Japanese culture. However, there is a big difference. Careful observation of the relation between the performer and the audience reveals that they are united only though the help of an electronic device. *Karaoke* performs the function of unifying people who have lost their ability to communicate with each other by any other means. The popularity of *karaoke* means that the Japanese have severed even more their ties to a traditional, continuous collectivity based on oral language, race, religion, taste and folkways.

Walkman, a cassette tape-recorder with a headphone is for personal use only, so that the users are isolated from one another even if they listen to the same music. All that unites them is the fact that they belong to the same electronic mass culture. Outdoor users of Walkman express their unconscious desire to be absorbed in the electronic culture, to the exclusion of all else — even other manifestations of that same culture: blaring speakers, noisy traffic and flickering signs in shop windows.

In this environment has emerged yet another medium: 'Mini FM,' a very low-powered, license-free radio station. In Japan, there has been no public access to regular broadcasting spectrum except on *bijaku-denpa* (very low-powered airwaves — "less than 15 microvolts per meter at the distance of 100 meters from the transmitter," according to Japanese law). These regulations were established in 1957 when electronic technology was gradually brought into the market. Thus, the *bijaku-denpa* was not intended to be a stingy 'public access' measure, but a practical way of allowing operation of such electronic devisces as wireless microphones, remote control televi-

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sion, garage-door openers, model airplanes and other wireless electronic gadgets. At that time, *bijaku-denpa* was useless for broadcasting. Now, though, the situation has changed as the radio receivers have become more sensitive while their cost has decreased. Today, most people have at least one or two transitor radios at home, which can catch signals of *bijaku-denpa* stations up to 500 meters away. This means that it is perfectly legal for a low-power unlicensed station to have a range with a diameter of a full kilometer, large enough to reach 20,000 people in a densely populated area.

In the late 1970s, some individuals and groups experimented with 'Mini FM' in an effort to open a free radio station, in response to "free radio" fever in Europe and CB mania in the U.S. However, enthusiasm for 'Mini FM' did not really catch fire until August 1982, when a station called KIDS in Aoyama, Tokyo, opened and newspapers, popular magazines and television carried reports on it. Within a month of its opening, its operators had been interviewed at least 30 times by conventional mass media. The publicity was enough to cause advertising agencies and service industries to beat a path to their door. It was only a matter of weeks before hundreds of imitators opened stations on campuses, in coffee shops, private spaces, stores and other gathering places. Given the excitable nature of Japanese mass media, daily newspapers and weekly magazines began to report about what was happening in 'Mini FM' and how to open up a 'Mini FM' station. By April 1983, almost all types of 'Mini FM' station had appeared.

Only now is the government beginning to discuss revision of the outdated broadcasting law. In comparison with the radical change of FM radio policy in the advanced industrial countries, the Japanese government has been reluctant to open the VHF airwaves to FM broadcasting, although this is indispensable for their new policy pushing localism, cultural diversity and the development of new media.

A short history of Japanese radio policy shows how long overdue this reassessment is. Regular FM radio broadcasting was authorized in 1969 with 170 public stations (in the whole country) and just one private station, FM *Aichi*. In Tokyo, NHK FM, the public station was the only authorized station on the FM band. A private FM Tokyo (FM Tokai at that time) did not receive a regular license until 1970, even though it had been approved to broadcast experimentally since 1961. After 1970, the government approved more licenses, but there were still only four private FM radio stations in the whole country until 1982, when five additional stations were licensed. Even today, Tokyo has only two FM radio stations. This is unbelievable in comparison with other countries. In Italy, although an extreme case, each major city has at least 100 FM stations. Rome alone has more than 200 stations.

Although hundreds of institutions — everything from advertising agencies to political and religious organizations — have continued to apply for licenses to the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications since 1945, no additional AM or FM stations have been approved in Tokyo, for instance, during the past 15 years. This abnormal situation is partly the result of government, headed by the Liberal Democratic Party, and private stations that are colluding to keep out competitors.

And so the stage was set for 'Mini FM' to become an instant hit. How it immediately caught people's interests is not entirely clear, yet surely the following factors played a strong part: (1) the public's desire for more diverse radio programs; (2) the influence of "free radio" in Europe; (3) the popularity of "fake" culture, especially American pop culture; (4) the arrival of a kind of techno-youth culture (involving teen-agers and kids even younger who are adepts with wireless microphones, walkie-talkies, model airplanes and electronic game machines); (5) the availability and lowered cost of elec-

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tronic devices such as tiny FM transmitters; and (6) the desire for new means of communication with others.

While thousands of 'Mini FM' stations rose and fell in three years, at least a hundred survive in Tikyo today. They can be classified in three categories. The first broadcasts mainly talk and music shows hosted by disc jockeys in open studios set up in everything from department stores to street festivals to coffee shops. In this case, the broadcasts are *less* designed to communicate than to entertain. Most end up as profit-making enterprise.The second kind of station is interested in establishing an alternative to traditional radio fare. These stations broadcast programs of music, news, talk shows and discussions intended to inform and educate listeners. AD AD in Nerima, Tokyo, is one such station. It has established a quite large network with a relay system and broadcasts mainly music programs. Another — JOGG FM Koenji — boradcasts every weekend and publishes a complete program every two weeks. They have many talented D.J.'s who have created a whole new kind of discourse that cannot be heard elsewhere on the FM dial.

The third type of station has given a radically different function to 'Mini FM,' and this represents one of the most valuable uses of 'Mini FM' and electronic mass culture in general. One such station is that of Setagaya MaMa, whose studio is housed in a small shack serving both as a gathering place for neighbors and an alternative retail store carrying natural foods and other sundry items. This station is radically free from professional programming and is open to anyone who wants to talk. Anything and everything heard in the store — slamming doors, idle chatter, comings and goings — is carried over the air. Once, when several people began talking about community politics, some listeners rushed to the station and joined in the discussion. Radio Komedia Suginami has established itself in a coffee shop. It has a program, but one so flexible that anybody in the coffee shop can join in the discussion. Radio Home Run tries develop this approach more consciously, defines itself as a gathering place with a transmitting device. For five days a week, various kinds of discussion are broadcast. Workers, political activists, feminists, artists, performers, journalists, students and unemployed get together in order to talk on the air and maintain a temporary collective. Visiting listerners can join in. Sometimes the people involved in an on-air discussion begin to work together outside the station as well, on projects that may be artistic or political or anything else.

In an odd but welcome twist, Radio Home Run is showing how a new collectivity can emerge from electronic mass culture. It has been able to re-activate individual desire for free, spontaneous *communion.* The electronic collectivity either integrates individuals into a homogeneous 'fused' collectivity or emancipates every *singularity* in the collective. Electronic media and the mass culture that they cultivate have this dual potentiality.

Japanese popular culture continues to waver between these two poles. The question now is whether popular culture will remain in the homogeneous capsule that was established with the modern emperor system *(tenno-sei)* and which has been reorganized with the development of the electronic mass media, or will destroy it.

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# DECONSTRUCTING D'AMICO, OR WHY JOEL WHITEBOOK IS SO UPSET

## by Robert D'Amico

My review of Cornelius Castoriadis' book *Crossroads in the Labyrinth* ended with the apt reference, I now see, to the emperor being naked. In Joel Whitebook's second review, largely irrelevant to my criticisms of Castoriadis, he fears, though he doesn't know me personally, that only the lack of psychological counseling can explain my uncontrolled anger against Castoriadis. Let me dignify his long distance psychoanalysis by passing over it in silence. Silence is also the best remedy for Whitebook's transcendental deduction that I have a "pluralistic, localistic, discontinuous ontology." Even if I knew what that was I find it amazing that he located it in a 10 page review. Perhaps Whitebook just "feels" the presence of this ontology along with evidence of my mental problems.

On the contrary, I'll try to be open about what strikes me as a pseudo-controversy. Whitebook has written, aside from the peculiar animosity toward me, a perfectly reasonable review of a seriously flawed but, as I said in my review, interesting book. What does Whitebook want? Apparently nothing short of homage to Castoriadis is taken as a sign of mental health. Oddly Whitebook feels he must justify his positive review of the book with a moralizing introduction defending Castoriadis against this insult hurling hatchet man. But where are all these insults? What is the "scandalous tone?" While my review criticized Castoriadis' views, the criticisms were not ad hominem arguments and certainly nothing in my review compares with Whitebook's opening and closing salvos directed to me personally. I assume, or better I hope, that given Castoriadis' life he has faced something greater than my criticism. The review even compliments Castoriadis on aspects of the book and its serious intention and criticizes him only for "public" reasons and never for "extra-theoretical" factors — perhaps I was too kind.

What is further surprising about this heated reply is that after all the anger Whitebook does not disagree with me on Castoriadis' position. Nor does Whitebook ever reply to my criticisms or show how my "counter-examples" (whatever he means by that) miss the point. In fact, my review uses Castoriadis' account of Freud and psychoanalysis, much as Whitebook does. In fact we agree, aside from my criticisms, that Castoriadis' analysis of psychoanalysis is important. Far from arguing a Lacanian position, as Whitebook inexplicably concludes, I can barely comprehend three sentences of any text by Lacan chosen at random. Apparently Whitebook can not imagine someone in good conscience disagreeing with Castoriadis and thus searches for some hidden, conspiratorial motive, no matter how unfounded.

Whitebook's review, though striving to situate Castoriadis, simply parallels my review. Though I concentrated on philosophy of science and epistemology as the context, we picked out *similar passages* and attribute *similar views* to Castoriadis. What is apparently shocking to Whitebook is that I concluded Castoriadis was wrong or didn't accomplish what he set out to do, argued in a pointlessly obscure or tautological fashion and failed to add anything to pressing theoretical concerns beside more cumbersome jargon.



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My review, virtually half the length of Whitebook's reply, chose a central theme in Castoriadis' essays. After all the fancy foot work, in my opinion, Castoriadis defends a historicist theory of knowledge. That is clear from numerous passages reiterated throughout the essays, though I am not clear whether Whitebook agrees. I consider historicism, however, an important, even central problem of recent epistemology. I am also sympathetic to the "sociological turn" in recent philosophy of science. I do not consider historicism, as Whitebook seems to suggest, a "puerile," relativist, irrationalist view completely transcended by Castoriadis' new "elucidation" technique. I add these autobiographical confessions because Whitebook assumes if you criticize a defense of historicism, which is all Castoriadis' "elucidation" amounts to, you must have a bizarre post-modernist agenda. Criticism of Castoriadis' pseudo-arguments does not leave one in the camp of irrationalism — it is a step toward clarity.

Why, given my apparent agreement with historicism, did I not embrace Castoriadis' approach? Precisely because Castoriadis' essays, while wandering from topic to topic, give no reasons for his positions, no arguments and no clarifications, inspite of the ever present word "elucidation." The reader is given nothing but aggressive assertions and dense, unreadable prose. Castoriadis' central claims about imaginary structures, science and historical conditioning are vague, perhaps suggestive, "intuitions." But intuitions are not enough, especially for serious theoretical questions. If Castoriadis is bored with all this, as his tone sometimes indicates, then write about something else. As against intuitionism, the contribution of *theory* is argument, criticism and reasoning not mysterious, unsupported "elucidations" which we accept because we believe Castoriadis is a marvelous person, or, as Whitebook recommends, "enter into Castoriadis' way of thinking" — something to be avoided at all costs.

Thus I find Castoriadis's ultimate position, and the quoted passages are in the review, totally unsatisfying. Whitebook has not found any more arguments, he has just given Castoriadis a peculiar seal of approval. Castoriadis is doing what Richard Bernstein, Hubert Dreyfus or Paul Rabinow are doing. Well if that is the case, though I fail to see how that would please Castoriadis (being damned by faint praise in his view, I would imagine), then I recommend any of the three over Castoriadis, for reasons of readability alone.

What is worse is that Whitebook's review continues the very dangers of Castoriadis' style, as stressed in my review. Castoriadis continually constructs imaginary opponents and ridiculous positions to attack while he proudly occupies a vacuous and ambiguous middle. But when you analyze Castoriadis' claims and reconstruct who he is criticizing you are left with massive confusions leading to innocuous conclusions. My review showed this in his views about science and historical conditions. Whitebook expands this shortcoming into a compliment by saying that Castoriadis always seeks the middle between foundationalism and objectivism on the one hand and relativism and historicism on the other. As I said in my review, who could disagree with wanting the advantages of all views and the weaknesses of none? Especially if you go on and clarify these alternatives an unthinking absolutism versus vicious relativism. It is all a pointless battle of empty caricatures. The problems remain because there are coherent and complex reasons for holding precisely the alternatives Castoriadis can't be troubled to explain. Castoriadis, and now Whitebook, consistently ignore real views, real arguments and real reasons for invented versions. If you take the trouble to examine any of Castoriadis' whipping boys you find that, positivism or structuralism for instance, are sophisticated, thoughtful and complex positions. But that means analyzing the best representatives of these views and then developing sound criticisms. Both struc-

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turalism and positivism are at least clearer and more defensible than anything Castoriadis has to offer, even where they are seriously mistaken. Castoriadis' position ends up a kind of lame historicism which neither defends itself nor does the hard work of criticism and commentary.

Unfortunately I think Castoriadis' stylistic tics have been passed on to Whitebook, as two following examples in Whitebook's review show. I ignored a great deal that Castoriadis said about language because it seemed the weakest material in the book. But Whitebook makes much of this topic and claims that for Castoriadis, "the relationship between the extralinguistic world and language cannot be one of utter contingency. If this were the case, it would be impossible to account for the fact of knowledge. Similarly, while language 'does not impose an absolute expression on the subject,' it does impose some constraint and order." In the section Whitebook is paraphrasing Castoriadis struggles with what is now called the question of conceptual schemes. Castoriadis discusses the old Whorf hypothesis about linguistic relativity in classifications. Even Whorf, however, who argued that perceptual classifications are dependent on language (which is all the original hypothesis said), never concluded that the relationship between language and the world was contingent. The two claims simply do not follow. If there is overdetermination of the world on language, as Castoriadis seems to suggest, it is quite compatible with a strict behaviorist account of language, as in Quine. Relativism of conceptual schemes meant that any scheme (embedded in a language) would "fit" the world in such a way that it was impossible, from within a scheme, to determine the real, correct fit. That is what Quine called the indeterminacy of translation or inscrutability of reference, which is among many positions that Castoriadis mentions repeatedly but never seems to get clear. But Castoriadis's remarkable conclusion is simply that languages provide *some* constraint or determination, vaguely stated just as Whitebook paraphrases. But all this tedious "elucidation" assumes that someone, who held to the linguistic relativity of conceptual schemes, also argued that language provides *no constraint.* But no one ever did. Once we eliminate the straw man Castoriadis has added nothing to an important issue, except, I fear, tolerance for more verbal moonshine.

In the conclusion of his reply Whitebook discusses Castoriadis on philosophy of science, the material I concentrated on. Whitebook says that Castoriadis has a critique of hermeneutical relativism in philosophy of science and begins with the claim that the best mathematicians, scientists and philosophers have always known that "their disciplines were by their nature problematic." Though that claim strikes me as historically false, I will not quibble. Then he adds; "This was not something that has only been discovered recently by Thomas Kuhn. Rather it is something that had to be rediscovered after positivism's concerted effort to wish this fact away." But if "this fact" refers to the phrase "the foundations of disciplines were by nature problematic" that is exactly what positivism asserted rather than wished away, whatever Whitebook is trying to say about Kuhn. But now I am speaking of real positivists and not Castoriadis' imaginary intellectual dolts. Whitebook then claims that an inference is often drawn (from "this fact"?) that, "nature exists as entirely unorganized material upon which we can arbitrarily impose any framework we wish." Who ever made this inference? How could anyone defend it? What great accomplishment will it be to show that it is false, since it is incoherent? Whitebook grandiously continues that Castoriadis shows in these essays not why Einstein's theory superceded Newton's but, "how nature must be organized to make such a transition possible." But Castoriadis only argues against a view that nature is abolutely unorganized (held by no one and indefensible at that). Even if the

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argument were worth pursuing it doesn't establish how nature must be constituted for the transition from Newton to Einstein, except in Castoriadis' imagination and in those who accept such unsupported assertions. Typical of the entire book Castoriadis takes a complex and difficult position, in this case *realism,* and reduces it to a bald assertion, an absurd argument against a straw man and potted history of science. The rest is filler.

There is, of course, an interesting problem here because Marxists traditionally waver between historicism and realism. We might expect, therefore, some insight by Castoriadis on whether these views can be reconciled and if so how. Isn't that what *Crossroads in the Labyrinth* is all about? Whitebook's paraphrase of Castoriadis' answer is completely faithful in style and content. "This is the point that Castoriadis wants to make, not with respect to the epistemological subject, but with respect to science: namely that nature must be constituted in such a way as to be at last amenable to the development of science as we know it." That either says nothing at all, trivially true for every position from idealism to realism, or it begs the truth of the very realism in question.

In spite of his attacks on the Marxist tradition, Castoriadis not only continues a version of historicism vastly inferior to that of Lukács, Gramsci or Labriola, but embraces a dogmatic tendency, also within Marxism, to adjudicate the sciences from a monolithic philosophical perspective. Lenin's *Empiriocriticism* diatribe is very much the archetype of this style and similarly depends on combining Lenin's historicist arguments about class determining theory with representational realism. Now I said in the beginning of my review that this encyclopedic effort combined with historicist reduction of the sciences by Castoriadis has certain metaphysical implications which are never discussed in the essays. Whitebook jumps on this remark and suggests I be hoisted by my own petard. My own views, which he has deduced by ESP as scattered brained postmodernism, also have metaphysical baggage. I plead guilty, at least, to having plenty of metaphysical baggage. So? My point was not that there be no metaphysical baggage but that one defend a position, especially in the space of books rather than reviews, and give some serious attention to genuine theoretical problems, whatever the metaphysical assumptions. By even generous standards, Castoriadis utterly fails at such a task.

Whitebook ends his review by saying that my resistance to Castoriadis' book is due to its radical departure from traditional scholarship. Apparently I can't handle these dazzling essays and so I blindly strike out against this iconoclastic but rigorous book, as I try to protect my crumbling academic security. But this whole self-conception of the book, definitely encouraged by Castoriadis' constant effort to make the reader aware of both his scholarly respectability and iconoclasm, strikes me as embarrassingly ironic. Castoriadis' book represents the deepest kind of traditional, academic, humanistic scholarship, something I do not automatically assume is an insult, contra Whitebook. But Castoriadis does speak from a lofty, mostly incomprehensible philosophical position. Whenever possible he forgoes argument for obscurity. He legislates what is and what is not science, while blithely dismissing all opponents and making the most grandiose and unsupported claims for himself. In fact the book and its title are doubly ironic since page after page reminded of nothing so much as when Descartes in *Discourse on Method* warns against those philosophers for whom "obscurity of the distinctions and principles which they use enables them to talk of all things as bravely as though they understood them perfectly, . . . In this they appear to me similar to a blind man who wishes to fight on even terms with one who can see, and so brings him to the back of some very dark cave." *Crossroads in the Labyrinth* is just such a very dark cave and every so often you can glimpse, lurking in its shadows, a lost academic.

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# Reviews

## A.J. Polan. *Lenin and the End of Politics.* Berkeley: University of California Press. 229 pages; $9.95 paper.

At the end of World War II Karl Popper, at the time a little known philosopher of science, published *The Open Society and Its Enemies.*[1] He dedicated the book to the victims of both Hitler's and Stalin's camps and called it his "war effort." The book had an enormous impact and spawned both imitators, such as Hannah Arendt's *The Origins of Totalitarianism,* and a great deal of debate. Whatever else it accomplished Popper's work politicized the history of ideas. Against the devastation of the war Popper refused to grant either innocence or quietude to the history of philosophy. He argued that ways of thinking and talking had terrible consequences; that philosophers legitimated terrible damage in their seemingly abstract inquiry. In an oddly Lukácsian way Popper declared that the pristine problems of philosophy were political struggles in another form. With such infamous lines as, "Hegel's historical historicism is still the fertilizer to which modern totalitarianism owes its rapid growth" (p. 59) Popper insisted that, whatever their intention, philosophers like Hegel, and those who defended such thought, were responsible for actions based on a conception of history and politics Popper called historicism.

*The Open Society* was, of course, an angry and polemical book in many ways hardly defensible when it pushed an extreme view of how ideas determine the course of history (as Marcuse pointed out in his review of Popper's similar arguments in *The Poverty of Historicism*[2]). But the book was a *tour de force* filled with, in equal measure, intemperate, unclear claims and interesting, perceptive arguments about social science, critical thinking and modernism; all alongside a well thought out criticism of determinism and objectivism in Marxism. Though Popper admired Marx, even when he attacked him, he was not enamored of Marxists, especially Lenin. "When [Lenin] published his book *State and Revolution* he was still a pure historicist. Not only was he as yet unaware of the most difficult problems involved in the task of constructing a new society; he even believed, with most Marxists, that the problems were non-existent, or they would be solved by the process of history . . . Lenin emphasizes the simplicity of the problems or organization and administration in the various phases of the evolving Communist society." (p. 320, fn. 7)

Polan doesn't mention Popper in *Lenin and the End of Politics* so I cannot be sure he

1. Karl Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies* Vol. II. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1962.

2. Herbert Marcuse, *Studies in Critical Philosophy.* London: New Left Books, 1972. Marcuse argues that Popper's thesis is that belief in historical destiny explains terror and violence. "I propose that it does not: where it was prevalent, it was derivative from and conditioned upon other factors in such a sense that a discussion which neglects these factors abstracts from the essential and suggests an incorrect interpretation of the causes, the functions and the prospects of historical violence. If the factors are present . . . there is no philosophy of history which may not lend itself to the systematic use of violence." (p. 194) The review, which appeared in *Partisan Review* in 1959, is also interesting because Marcuse's defensiveness about Marxism and historical law lends support to Piccone's thesis that, "Rather than critically dissecting Marxism itself critical theorists initially choose to merely modify it by taking out a mortgage that finally came due in the mid 60s." Paul Piccone, "The Crisis of One-Dimensionality" *Telos* 35 (1978), p. 43.



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read the above passage but it could be the epigram of his book. *Lenin and the End of Politics* is a detailed and profound meditation on this Popperian comment. Polan levels a moral and intellectual condemnation of Leninism, picking for his central piece of evidence *The State and Revolution*; a book viewed by both followers and critics of Bolshevism as liberal and democratic. It is precisely this unwitting agreement about Lenin's positive contribution that Polan treats with suspicion. In Lenin's emphasis on administrative simplicity and historical inevitability, those aspects Popper commented on in passing, Polan locates the seeds of Gulag legitimation.

But Polan's book is more than a careful reading of one short work by Lenin. It is a far reaching, rigorously argued and ambitious analysis of the whole spectrum of left oriented, critical, emancipatory, neo-Marxist theory of the last couple of decades. I do not think any significant theoretical debate about the left can ignore this book. While Polan escapes being neatly classified as either "right" or "left" his assessment of radical thought has *begun* to take us beyond those crippling historical choices. I stress "begin" because, as I will argue below, I have some strong reservations about the central arguments and conclusions of the book. But thinking against Polan's clarity and precision means one is getting somewhere, no mean achievement in these days of fashionable obscurity.

Lenin's *The State and Revolution* is the archimedian point in the dissolution of Marxism into the ideology of bureaucratic socialism. Its importance for Polan lies in the text's reputation as an emancipatory, humanistic and utopian analysis, even by those opposed to Leninism. Polan is wary of utopian discourse. He argues for a link between those aspects of *The State and Revolution* that attract the "dissidents"[3] and the very authoritarianism they struggle against. How the dissidents "read" Lenin is "trapped in terms of a discourse and thinking initiated by Lenin himself." (p. 36).

The utopian or democratic elements of *The State and Revolution* are traditionally associated with Lenin's adoption of Marx's "commune-State" analysis and Lenin's attack on bureaucracy. Lenin's argument, as is well known, declares that all States are repressive and thus revolution seeks the complete abolition of the State machinery through the dictatorship of the proletariat. Without classes the State is unnecessary since all tasks will reduce to administrative functions, requiring neither experts nor bureaucracies. Also, the commune-State does not distinguish between legislative, executive and judicial functions; it rejects the shame of parlimentarianism for a direct, Soviet or council model. All offices rotate and are subject to immediate recall and average salaries; strategies Lenin claims prevent the formation of bureaucratic control. Finally, Lenin offers the infamous prophecy that under revolutionary socialism the old State machinery just withers away.

Polan's thesis is that; "an unsophisticated anti-bureaucratism ends up conspiring with the bureaucracy in the maintenance of its power." In other words, the utopian programme of the commune-State is in complicity with the authoritarian-bureaucratic socialism that followed through a vast underestimation and reductive treatment of the problem of administration. It was not that Lenin's vision was corrupted, abandoned or betrayed but, on the contrary, implemented. *The State and Revolution* provided the space in which Soviet society legitimated its policies, understood its history, excused its errors and repressed its critics.

Polan contrasts, thoughout the book, Lenin's simplistic analysis of bureaucracy with

3. The classic dissident statement on Leninism is L. Colletti, *From Rousseau to Lenin*. London: NLB, 1972. Also R. Bahro, *The Alternative*. London: NLB, 1978 and U. Santamaria and A. Manville, "Lenin and the Transition" *Telos* 27 (1976) 79-96.

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Weber. Weber argued that the modern State was more complex, not simpler, and that the phenomenon of bureaucracy was part of a broad project of modernization and rationalization in society involving literacy, division of powers, the rule of law and secular decision-making. Far from Lenin's picture of petty dispensable civil servants maintaining their salary privileges the bureaucracy is embedded in the central forces of modern life. Further, according to Polan, Weber does not treat the term "administration" as a simple utilitarian, "neutral" function. While Lenin views administration as a mere technical matter, except when it is distorted by the old State machinery and class interests, Weber analyzes how technical decision-making interacts with the purposive and value laden character of practical life. For Lenin the State machinery, after the dictatorship of the prolateriat, is nothing more than a postal service. But this reduction of a complex problem to an illusory simplicity not only identifies administration with functional utility but leaves public debate out; the postal service model suppresses the problem of conflicting values under a veneer of immediate necessity. The evil of bureaucracy, according to Lenin, is high salary and expertise; but this simplification elevates utility to a transcendent value. Such reductive economism actually preserves utility and administrative action as an ideology. By removing the bureaucracy and the State machinery in a utopian vision Lenin demands a spontaneous unity of the "general will" — a new public sphere, as Polan says, "bathing in limpid clarity and mutual enlightenment . . . devoid of conflicts." The optimism of *The State and Revolution* only sets the stage for an endless supply of scapegoats, readily available to explain each and every delay of the always promised future. As Polan says; "Thus Lenin's possible response to Weber's problems, his simple mechanisms for control of the state, are profoundly flawed. Instant recall of administrators initially dissolves the adminstration into the people, and makes them subject to the same norms of political interests as obtained in the public sphere. The consequence of that is corrupt administration . . . This threatens not only the performance of the necessary functions of administration, but, further, the safeguarding of the access of minority opinion to the decision-making process." (p. 78)

*The State and Revolution* is the utopian fairy-tale of a repressive State; Soviet in name but not open to question. If the technical problems do not dissolve it is blamed on a remnant of the old State or a malicious individual, not on the original assumptions of simple administrative success.

While abstractly invoking the people at every turn, the text surreptitiously allows the dictatorship of the proletariat to replace all spaces, distinctions, processes and interpretations of public debate. Precisely by reifying administration into an institution and then identifying all debate over the values to be administered with the "logic of history" (known by the Party and its science) the text literally erases politics and rational debate. In *The State and Revolution* all failure is petty corruption and all political struggle, always a struggle for private interest in Lenin, must be a regression and must be repressed.

In this way the enormous obstacles to the Soviet program, well understood within Weber's model, had to appear in Leninism as "criminal;" the unassimilable chunks of the messy past soon to be "simplified." While Lenin argued that parlimentarianism robbed people of participation through control over "talk," his administrative analysis does the same by allowing bare utility to stand for all meaningful decision-making.

Lenin's solution was catastrophic; problems were dissolved by being collapsed into a mythical unity of the people and all social roles disappeared into administrative efficiency. As Polan concludes; "The elected deputies are to be civil servants, ministers

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and representatives of their constituents at one and the same time. They have to make the laws, carry them out *and* criticize them. Here Lenin summarily overthrows any previous claim he might have had to be treating bureaucratization as a serious problem . . . (The only question seems to be of what such an individual would die: overwork or multiple schizophrenia.)" (p. 81)

Thus Polan's position on Leninism goes farther than critics like Colletti, Marcuse or Santamaria and Manville who, while seeing the Party as a corrupting influence, accept Leninism's claim that liberal, democratic and repressive States are all bourgeois. On the contrary, Polan's argument does not emphasize the shortcomings of the Party. Polan suggests that the Bolshevik Party had all the structural limitations and exclusions of most parties of the time; even its hermeticism was not unusual. Thus the explanation of the Party's repressive evolution requires asking what particular conditions interacted with its institutional form. Polan's explanation is the link between the Party and Lenin's *theoretical program* which abolished a constitution, promised a utopian unity and collapsed the public space of debate into administration (i.e., carrying out the directives of the Party). The Party's disastrous leadership was not simply the result of internal, institutional weakness but its mixture with Lenin's philosophical assumptions about a scientific theory of history and a neutral utilitarian administration. Lenin's discourse justified the Party's authority by replacing legitimate debate with scientism. The discourse of Leninism, as Polan says, "manages to police itself."

Polan's book periodically leaves Lenin for a broader discussion in which, among other things, he implicates the Frankfurt School in aspects of this hysterical utopianism. Though Polan uses Adorno's arguments against "identity theory" to link Lenin's metaphysics and political programme, Polan is more worried about the influence of Horkheimer's "Authoritarian State."[4] In it, Polan argues, Lenin's collapse of liberal and repressive regimes is recycled. In Horkheimer, however, the failure of liberalism leads to an attack on European rationality itself. Polan traces this back to the Frankfurt School's misunderstanding of Weber's arguments (he does not, however, see this misinterpretation or attitude in the work of Pollock and Neumann).

Weber tried, in Polan's view, to construct a typology of State forms and then understand in detail how and why bureaucracy became the common element in modernization. The Frankfurt School, especially Horkheimer and Adorno in *Dialectic of Enlightenment,* turned rationalization into a metaphysical principle and criticized enlightenment per se. Enlightenment was required by critical theory to fail. While thinking themselves opponents of Leninism, as with other dissidents, Lenin's discourse insinuated itself in their conclusions. The treatment of enlightenment reinforced, albeit in its negative form, Lenin's confidence in a "logic" to history and belief that total administration could succeed. Though anti-political in their pessimism, Horkheimer and Adorno saw history as revealing, to those equipped to know, a meaning, message and story that constrained and limited all political action. Though they rightly treated left optimism as dangerous and were free of Leninism's scientism, the Frankfurt School clung to Leninism's reductive historicism — revealed in the prophecy of a totally administered society.

According to Polan, the Frankfurt School's pessimism was caused by viewing bureaucratic domination as generic to both democratic and authoritarian regimes. Marcuse's "totalitarian mass democracy" and totally administered society warnings

4. M. Horkheimer, "The Authoritarian State" in A. Arato and E. Gebhardt, *The Essential Frankfurt School Reader.* Oxford, 1978.

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reflected this assumption (which Polan traces back to Lenin's misunderstanding of bureaucracy) but were obsolete by the time Marcuse had an audience. From this perspective Polan sees Piccone's artificial negativity thesis as the most important recent reexamination of critical theory.[5]

Polan interprets artifical negativity as a thesis about the strictly limited success of administration. Historically, bureaucratic expansion accompanies the triumph of state-regulated capitalism. But administration soon reaches an internal crisis if allowed to manage the entire society since it necessarily destroys critical feedbacks and its own ability to rationally steer society. Thus, the artificial negativity thesis completely destroys Lenin's argument, especially as a justification of the naive utopianism of *The State and Revolution.* Lenin's view of administrative simplicity and success, once disparate wages and private interests are removed, is not only guileless (in a disturbing sense) but drastically destabilizing — as the subsequent history of the Soviets proved.

Polan introduces Piccone's thesis when discussing the absence of a "place" for critical feedback in Lenin's commune-State. "Citizens must be entitled to form associations articulating their alternate reality — otherwise called a political party and programme — in a space between the fragmented ignorance of the workplace and the unified positivity of the governmental authority. In fact, not only is this a fundamental precondition for . . . democratic process . . . but a condition for sensible adminstration. Indeed Piccone's concept of artificial negativity . . . suggests that if criticism does not exist, then governments will have to invent it if they are to fulfill their function." (p. 96) While Polan agrees with Piccone's attack on total administration, and accepts his individual analysis of the Vietnam War, for example, Polan believes artificial negativity retains the basic one-dimensionality thesis of the Frankfurt School and thus residual elements of Lenin's utopianism. Polan claims that Piccone's analysis cannot accept that Watergate, the civil rights struggle or attacks on the CIA may involve, not governmental generated criticism, but a real triumph of the constitution, division of powers and a viable public sphere (i.e., liberalism). Piccone, Polan argues, treats reforms as vacuous because he retains a basic commitment to Marxist categories — specifically the Leninist notion of a bourgeois "essence" to all States.

Polan's attitude on this point is characteristic of the book. While constructing a brilliant and compelling analysis he often lapses into his own naiveté about liberalism. Polan seems to require that the liberal version of social change be accepted at face value without a critical treatment of how it really functions, where it emerges or why it succeeds — precisely the project of Piccone's thesis.

While readers of *Telos* will find Polan's basic thesis about Leninism uncontroversial — and *Lenin and the End of Politics* is, among other things, a "son" of *Telos* as Polan admits — his rediscovery of the liberal, democratic tradition strikes me as a slight case of amnesia. An unqualified invocation of "public sphere," "division of powers," and the rest of Civics 101 simply cannot stand as adequate at this late date. It ignores much debate and analysis that cannot be dismissed as vulgar Marxism. There is too much evidence about how liberal institutions actually operate, as in the various "gatekeepers" to regulate and filter opinions, for Polan's assertions to constitute an argu-

5. The artificial negativity thesis is discussed in: Paul Piccone "The Crisis of One-Dimensionality" and Piccone and Tim Luke, "Culture and Politics in the Age Artificial Negativity" both in *Telos* 35 (1978) and Paul Piccone, "The Changing Function of Critical Theory," *New German Critique,* 12 (Fall, 1977), pp. 29-38.

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ment. For example, the federal government has evolved an entire network of procedure and casual structures that work around the separation of powers. Whether that institutional evolution is good or bad is not the point. The point is that Polan's rhetorical assertion of idealized liberalism is just as utopian an explanation of social change as Lenin's adminstrative efficiency.

Polan understands the artificial negativity thesis as a simplified conspiracy of the "capitalist class" always gaining their desired ends. I do not think that is a fair reading. Piccone and Luke state; "In the final analysis, then, artificial negativity emerges with the cultural alternatives and the political movements *arising from within* state-corporate capitalism, but *directed* against it. Thus, internal challenges to the administrative domination of the transitional system uncover its unreconciled contradictions and recreate the internal political checks and balances which would limit purposive-rational social domination and allow for the reopening of the public sphere." (p. 56)

Not only is this not a conspiracy theory but it does exactly what Polan claims traditional leftism avoids. It treats the social structure as complex and seeks an explanation for both the function of the public sphere and its historical transformation. What Piccone and Luke do *not* do is, like Polan, simply appeal to democratic structures without analyzing how they are historically situated. If anything, Piccone and Luke, more clearly than Polan, offer the kind of alternative hypothesis Popper had in mind when he objected to conspiracy theories of history. "Social life . . . is action within a more or less resilient or brittle framework of institutions and traditions, and it creates apart from any conscious counter-action — many unforseen reactions in the framework . . . the unintended social repercussions of intentional human action." (*The Open Society*, p. 95)

Polan agrees with Piccone that liberal democracies have not reached the stage of total administration. But he then assumes, contra Piccone, that these institutions are secure against abuse and do not require the same historical study as Leninism. Polan's normative commitments foreclose inquiry. I see no problem in, for example, accepting Lenin's criticism that parliamentarianism was a sham, *at that time.* If Polan replies that "bad" things happened when that criticism was acted upon the same can be said of policies sustained by liberal institutions and philosophies (unless again liberalism is always given the benefit of the doubt or idealized). No institutional form is immune from either abuse or legitimation of violence. As I understand Piccone's thesis, it raises the level of explanation by not restricting the debate to whether civil rights, for instance, was a blow against capitalism or a triumph of the First Amendment. Piccone seeks a "logic" of the institutions that situates these events rather than treating them as transcendent, mythological victories *or* defeats. Polan's attitude, in contrast, gives ideas a power to determine institutions and politics in a way that makes even Piccone look like a sober-sided materialist.

*Lenin and the End of Politics* has quite a bit on problems of hermeneutics, textal interpretation and strategies of reading. It is a book influenced by textual criticism as much as political theory. Though there is nothing wrong with a more sensitive attitude towards texts and historical interpretation, and Polan makes fine points against objectivist models of reading, he ends up with an extreme view of text and event. Throughout the book there is a strong moralizing tendency and, like Popper, a tendency to attribute overwhelming power to "ideas" (now embodied in texts) especially when, like historicism, those ideas are disliked. Thus, while certain texts are agents for enormous evil other views are given a break when it comes to historical responsibility. The prob-

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lem here is not the criticism of Lenin but the textual metaphysics. "It matters not what Lenin's intentions were. The extent of Lenin's responsibilities is not defined by his intentions, but by his implications. Lenin's text was responsible for things that Lenin, perhaps, never conceived. The issue is not what the author intended, but what the text dictated. The text created a discourse — a field of ideas within which subsequent thinking had to take place, outside of which thought was not merely illegal, but impossible, a non-sense . . . Only the passage of time can subvert such a discourse; reason can do nothing." (p. 130)

This passage by Polan is all the more extraordinary since it follows so closely after his rejection of what Polan calls Piccone's "tortuous sub-Hegelian schemes" in defense of artificial negativity. Polan's textualism is Hegelian with a vengeance. Not only do discourses, behind our backs, dictate what we think and say but they are immune to reason. Perhaps they'll decay like giant forests through the passage of time but its useless for criticism to saw away.

Polan's textual idealism produces a "there is nothing outside the text" history of Bolshevism. But Polan also wants a "causal" link between Lenin's texts and subsequent events. Thus, he appeals to something independent of the discourse's power. "The text [*The State and Revolution*] in all its moments — libertarian and authoritarian — is *guilty* of subsequent developments: that is, the features of the authoritarian Soviet regime are present within every line and concept of the text . . . the *cultural* effect of *The State and Revolution* can be suggested as the *causal link* between the text and subsequent events." (p. 129)

One objection is that this warrants traditional armchair philosophizing. The critic deciphers history in the margins of texts. Polan could defend himself by arguing that whatever we choose as the reference for history, practices, political programs, strategies, economies, even wars, are actually *representations.* "Text" then includes not only books but organization strategies, negotiations and political programs. Politics is not just the movement of bodies but meaningful action and thus a "picture" of the world from a viewpoint and with a specific theoretical agenda. Polan however does restrict "text" to books, and creates this strange demand for *causal* links between written passages, the author's life and historical events. (See, for example, his chapter called "The Text and its Context: A Microscopic Universe")

Polan's best point is that texts are most dangerous when they are assumed to be absent. The appeal to what is "obvious," "natural," "inevitable" or "practical" is always loaded with concealed theory. Gramsci says somewhere that common sense is simply the worst philosophy. Thus Polan may be right that texts have a life of their own, that is, they are caught like all forms of representation in unpredictable struggles and consequences. Certainly I agree that the author's intention cannot control the text's dissemination.

But that last point is exactly what makes me doubt Polan's view of interpretation. Not only is the search for "causal" links strained given his arguments against economism and historicism, but moral condemnation depends on some definitive interpretation and control over the impact of texts or discourses. The whole effort to assign blame and responsibility, which could work in Popper's more traditional ontology, is constantly at war with Polan's theory of interpretation. While a tone of moral responsibility gives more weight to Polan's defense of liberalism as a solution, his own analysis denies intention or a way to determine textual effects. Without the author's intention as a guide and Polan's admission that there is no definitive version of texts *or history itself* I wonder how Polan defends his moral reading of all left attacks on liberalism

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(which includes Piccone because anti-Leninism must not also criticize liberal policies).

There is an unreconciled struggle in this book between Polan's effort to situate himself in such critical enterprises as post-modernist, discourse analysis and critical theory of society while holding a traditional, anti-historicist view of knowledge and value theory which he gets from Gadamer. "Thus the ever-already-given understandings and meanings into which we are born, the cultural biases and assumptions to which Adorno fearfully pointed, are something we may be able to come to terms with and utilize in the search for truth. Not, of course, if they remain, as in the ordinary run of daily life, unperceived and uninterrogated assumptions. They must be scrutinized by reason. But it is a reason less commanding, less arrogant, less legislative, than that deployed by those who wish only to examine the past in order to expose its redundancy, its illegitimacy, its immorality, its irrelevance. The organizing principle of understanding, therefore, is not *rupture* . . . but *continuity*." (p. 49)

When have the discourses of tradition and continuity ever been innocent or less commanding and arrogant? Who decides that a certain question is immoral and irrelevant? Where does the criteria for distinguishing between "good" and "bad" traditions come from, if not traditions themselves? Polan would suggest that my questions condemn us to silence or nihilism. My questions simply show that there are no privileged and neutral vantagepoints from which to survey the past, nor any philosophical solutions, in Gadamer or Lenin, to the historicity of knowledge and action. If that is nihilism or arrogance, so be it.

A particularly good example of Polan's blindness to his own moralizing rhetoric is his use of Sartre in the chapter "A Politics for the End of Time." Having myself been fascinated by the arguments about groups and series in Sartre's *Critique de le Raison Dialectique* I appreciate Polan's summary and defense of Sartre. But Sartre, like liberalism, suddenly enters the text, without a clear relation to what went before, as a voice of wisdom and restraint. What makes Sartre's approach better?

For instance, Sartre's concept of scarcity in the *Critique* is clearly an ontological category that regulates all human action. Earlier Polan warns that it is necessary, when dealing with evils such as the Gulag, not to universalize and generalize the problem so as to dissolve its specificity as an event. Do not, he warns, turn political struggles into metaphysical necessities. Once again the moral implications are emphasized. But in discussing Sartre he says with praise; "Sartre calls on historical examples only as illustrative aids. The analysis is not an account of revolution . . . but the process of revolution itself . . . Sartre's discussion is ontological, not empirical . . . not . . . derived from concrete history . . . [but] starting from the individual conceived with a minimum of assumptions — assumptions that would have to be derived *from* history — to understand the field of human actions in history." (p. 192-3)

Why does Sartre's ontologizing of scarcity escape the condemnation of Lenin's attempt to "ontologize the apocalypse" in *The State and Revolution*? Certainly Sartre's argument that scarcity is a permanent feature of all life could cause terrible political consequences. While Polan is right about Lenin he does not make clear what allows him to suspend the same accusation in the case of Sartre. Is it simply that no one has acted on the basis of Sartre's *Critique*? And would that make any difference if the implications of texts cannot be foreseen or controlled? Polan does agree that some have read Sartre's *Critique* as glorifying the "group-in-fusion" moment of the dialectic. "There is consequently a danger in Sartre's theory of groups: the danger is that the apocalyptic group may be read as the state most . . . desired . . . If Sartre has spelled out the seductive qualities of the apocalyptic state, he cannot automatically be con-

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demned as its high priest . . . he has justified nothing." (p. 203)

I think the "automatically" in the above quote and the way Polan asserts that Sartre's text "justifies nothing" suppresses questions concerning Polan's evaluative reading and his political-moral textual analysis. His excursions into hermeneutics finally do not clarify how Polan reconciles the historicity of knowledge (traditions) and for his own moral evaluations. Aside from comments about how all historians must write from their "present" Polan's theoretical apparatus is curiously silent.

These reservations and criticisms, which require further development, should in no way detract from Polan's superb effort. Critical social theory, which has fallen in recent times into repetitive and formulaic leftism or dessicated conceptual analysis, emerges from Polan's book as once more a vital subject with important problems and challenging answers.

**Robert D'Amico**

## Martin Jay, *Adorno* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1984). 192 pp.

Martin Jay is well aware of the pitfalls involved in contributing a volume on Adorno to the "Modern Masters" series. "Adorno, let it be admitted at the outset, would have been appalled at a book of this kind devoted to him," is the sentence with which the book begins. Indeed, for Adorno, who strove concertedly to resist easy consumption in the bourgeois marketplace of ideas, such canonization would have been simply anathema. At the outset of his portrait Jay offers several reasons why, despite the misgivings that could be anticipated from his subject, an accessible, summarizing account of a philosophical approach notorious for its hermeticism would still be warranted. The first reason pertains to the (by now hackneyed) hiatus between authorial intention and reception of a work. Adorno himself relied on the argument that, at least in the case of literature, "intention" indicated the most superficial aspect of a work, often ruducible to questions of "style," whereas the "truth-content" of a work, which it fell due to the critic to expose, was as a rule the product of deep-seated, unconscious social impulses.[1] He could consequently hardly object to the same arguments being applied to his own work. Yet, whereas such considerations would certainly invite — even justify — intelligent commentary, they still leave the issue of the "Modern Masters" context untouched. Another of Jay's points is, however, especially well taken: attempts to produce Adornoesque commentaries on Adorno more often than not

1. Cf. Adorno, "Der Autor als Statthalter," *Noten zu Literatur* (Frankfurt, 1958-74).

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degenerate to the level of parody. Hence the necessity of some degree of paraphrastic simplification. His final argument, perhaps a trifle ironic, suggests that the inevitable insufficiencies of attempts to represent Adorno's complexities via more conventional discursive means will inevitably impel readers to seek out the original as a necessary corrective. Perhaps this conjecture is slightly optimistic; but it is true that a successful introduction should not attempt to serve as a surrogate for the original, but instead stimulate interest in the latter.

All in all, questions concerning the merits of an introductory study on Adorno cannot be decided in the abstract, apart from the character of the specific work under consideration. There are good and bad introductory studies. Let it be said then that, in the main, Jay has written a remarkably good one. Perhaps, what accounts for its exceptional quality is an acute awareness of the limitations involved in the undertaking itself. Jay's account remains, wisely, selective rather than pseudo-comprehensive. From a tactical standpoint, this means that he tends to concentrate on seminal essays such as "Subject-Object" and "Sociology and Psychology," which themselves represent excellent entrees to Adorno's thought as a whole, rather then on the unwieldy masterworks such as *Negative Dialectics* and *Aesthetic Theory,* each of which would merit far more detailed consideration. Moreover, Jay has not in the least tried to gloss over the manifold and fruitful *tensions* that lend Adorno's work its undeniable power and brilliance. The portrait of Adorno that emerges is far from a reductive one; instead, it is the methodological leitmotif of a constellation that guides Jay's study. Adorno's thought is situated in terms of a variety of competing, yet complementary motifs: Western Marxism, aesthetic modernism, Judaism, mandarin cultural conservatism, and non-identitarian philosophy. This is the constellation of influences in terms of which Adorno's contribution to a variety of fields is examined: philosophy, social theory, and aesthetics, following an introductory intellectual biographical portrait.

The merits of this approach in terms of its capacities to remain faithful to the polyvalence of Adorno's own discourse is great. Yet, so chameleonic and nuanced is Adorno's theory — let us call it negative dialectics — that even the most perceptive of classificatory schemes runs grave risks. Doubtless *History and Class Consciousness,* and above all its central category of reification, had a pronounced influence on Adorno's intellectual development, as it did on a great many philosophically trained, left-wing intellectuals of his generation. Yet, closer scrutiny suggests that his philosophy of non-identity, his hesitancy to reconcile prematurely existing contradictions in positive syntheses, possesses more in common with the "tragic" world-view of the pre-Marxist Lukács, i.e., the author of *Soul and Form* and *Theory of the Novel.* The absence of an omniscient historical metasubject in the latter two works, combined with a standpoint of unremitting hostility to the bourgeois order in virtually all its aspects, seems to betray much greater affinities with the position Adorno would eventually make his own than with the Hegelian inclination toward the apocalyptic resolution of contradictions characteristic of Lukács 1923 work.

Of perhaps equally dubious value when brought to bear on Adorno is the rubric of "mandarin cultural conservatism" — a German academic character type that has received its fullest elaboration in Fritz Ringer's well known work.[2] The "cultural conservatism" of this type is most often accented with powerful dose of cultural anti-modernism, since modernism is deemed part and parcel of the dissolution of traditional standards and values. Yet, aesthetic modernism was one of the more profound

2. Cf. Ringer, *The Decline of the German Mandarins* (Cambridge, 1969); and Lunn, *Marxism and Modernism* (Berkeley, 1982).

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cultural allegiances animating Adorno's work. The "conservatism" of the mandarin-type is of a deeply elitist, quasi-aristocratic bearing, and therefore hardly compatible with a philosophical project whose self-professed *raison d'etre* was to "lend a voice to historically accumulated suffering." Were Adorno to be characterized as a "romantic anti-capitalist" — a term coined by Lukács in the spirit of self-criticism in the 1962 Preface to *Theory of the Novel* — that would be another matter entirely. The salient feature of this character type — " 'left' ethics, 'right' epistemology," according to Lukács — could with some measure of justification be rightfully attributed to Adorno (Lukács also mentions Bloch and Benjamin in this connection). Yet, "left ethics" were by no means a prominent feature of the subjects of Ringer's study: Max Weber, Simmel, Treitschke, Mommsen, and Alfred Weber. And as Jay himself observes appropriately, Adorno's characteristic scorn for administered 'low culture' (the "culture industry") was by no means accompanied by uncritical acclaim for bourgeois 'high culture,' as his analyses of Stravinsky, surrealism, and the later Schoenberg attest — precisely the acclaim one would expect from a mandarin-type. Instead, Adorno was always unfailingly critical of the mandarin practice of seeking refuge in the ideas of high culture while ignoring the material substrate of suffering injustice upon which all higher culture itself is founded.[3]

Treating Adorno as in some sense a "Jewish thinker" is also questionable. To be sure, Jay recognizes the tenuous status of Adorno's relation to his own Jewish background (his father was Jewish, while his mother was Catholic). For example, it is alleged that at one point Adorno entertained the idea of converting to Catholicism (19). It is true, as Jay observes, that Auschwitz came to occupy an overdetermined, priviledged metaphorical status in his post-war writings. Yet, it was always more the *cultural* significance of the holocaust — the ultimate and brutal triumph of identity over difference — that occupied pride of place in his reflections, rather than any specifically religious meaning. It has been suggested at times that Franz Rosenzweig's *The Star of Redemption* exerted an influence on Adorno.[4] Yet, aside from the paucity of supporting evidence for this claim, it is extremely doubtful that Adorno, a perennial foe of *Lebensphilosophie* in all its forms, would have been attracted by Rosenzweig's recasting the major themes of Jewish theology in existentialist terms. As Jay indicates, however, undoubtedly the major source of Jewish influence on Adorno was his close intellectual partnership with Walter Benjamin dating from the late 1920s — a time at which, ironically, Benjamin himself was attempting to extirpate the theological residues of his own thinking. The issue of Benjamin's own relationship to Judiasm is exceedingly complex and a topic I have pursued at length elsewhere.[5] Let it be said that here too it was less the explicitly religious content of Benjamin's thought — spurred on as it was at times by Kabbalistic motifs — that captured Adorno's imagination, but instead the secular, historico-philosophical implications of an approach that conceived of history as a *Verfallsgeschichte* or history-of-decline, and consequently construed the mission of the critic as one of sifting through the ruins of history for fragmentary allegorical indicators of "reconciliation." Indeed, for both Benjamin and Adorno, it was above all the literature of aesthetic modernism that provided such allegorical indicators.

3. Above all, see Adorno's essay "Cultural Criticism and Society," in *Prisms* (London, 1967).

4. Cf. the excellent work by Susan Buck-Morss, *The Origin of Negative Dialectics* (New York, 1977), chapter 1.

5. Richard Wolin, *Walter Benjamin: An Aesthetic of Redemption* (New York, 1982); see especially chapter 2, "The Path to *Trauerspiel*," pp. 29-77. See also Gershom Scholem, *Walter Benjamin: The Story of a Friendship* (New York, 1983).

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Despite the difficulties in attempting to capture the intractable elusiveness of Adorno's discourse, Jay's narrative proceeds with admirable fluidity and precision. Particularly successful are his expositions of "Subject-Object" and "Sociology and Psychology," both paragons of Adorno's own inimitable approach to dialectic. In the case of "Subject-Object," Jay explains how Adorno simultaneously affirms and denies the historically received separation between these categories. Their diremption is true insofar as it registers accurately an objective state of affairs: the existence of a lacerated social totality that persists intransigently in an unreconciled state; yet, it is at the same time false once it is elevated to the level of an ontological constant, thus resulting in the ignominious glorification of the wrong state of things. Equally suspect, however, are those theoretical outlooks that attempt to deny or suppress this very real dichotomy conceptually while allowing it to persist in the domain of material life itself. Both idealism and positivism are guilty of this practice in diametrically opposed respects: each accords primacy to one of the poles of the opposition, suppressing the other in the interest of a premature and false notion of conceptual unity. In Adorno's discussion of the relation between subject and object, there is a tension established between, on the one hand, his pronounced and unmistakable longing for some type of *reconciliation (Versöhnung)* of the antagonism, and on the other hand, a profoundly innate suspicion of all philosophical attempts to proclaim their union as an accomplished fact. In this dialectical tension between longing and aversion lies one of the primal impulses of negative dialectics — a conceptual approach that seeks to avoid at all costs the semblance of reconciliation amid the persistence of social antagonisms, while all the while continuing to hold out the prospect, however faint, of an eventual genuine reconciliation. What would such a "genuine reconciliation" look like? On this score, Adorno characteristically remains faithful to the Judeo-Marxian *Bilderverbot* (taboo against graven images); otherwise, one risks falling victim to a logic of celebration in advance, which can only in the long run obscure the arduous nature of the course that must be traversed. Yet, Adorno, if he is to employ the category of reconciliation in good faith, cannot help but occasionally leave behind traces as to its nature. It is by now common knowledge that he considered the aesthetic realm a privileged repository of non-coercive, hence authentic approaches to the problem of totality. In the works of aesthetic modernism he believed one could find genuine prefigurations of an emancipated future, insofar as here totalities were formed in fully egalitarian fashion, i.e., in a manner that ensured that none of the various moments attained an authoritative primacy vis-à-vis the others. Hence, reconciliation suggests the notion of a radically democratic equilibrium, a society freed from socially superfluous domination. "Peace is the state of distinctness without domination, with the distinct participating in each other," remarks Adorno in "Subject-Object," where "peace," according to Jay, "is a three-starred constellation composed of collective subjectivity, individual subjectivity and the objective world" (65).

In chapter 3 Jay also offers a praiseworthy account of Adorno's approach to social theory and psychoanalysis. Here, one sees at work the same attentiveness to dialectical subtleties and reversals that informs "Subject-Object." The traditional scholastic distinction between sociology and psychology, like that between subject and object, is also both "correct and false." Correct insofar as it registers an objectively existing antagonism between universal and particular on which the present social order is founded; false insofar as the two moments are inextricably interrelated, implying that neither can be understood without the other as its necessary concomitant. Put more concretely, the opposition between the two moments expresses the degree to which

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the reigning social totality under late capitalism increasingly presents itself as oppressively inimical from the standpoint of the particular individuals that comprise it. Yet, as Jay indicates, it also conveys the fact that neither moment is fully reducible to the other; that despite the objective primacy of the universal, the individual psyches in thrall to it possess simultaneously a moment of autonomy or non-identity which at present represents a potential residue of free space. From his partisanship for this vestige of psychological autonomy follow many aspects of Adorno's — and critical theory's — appropriation of psychoanalysis in general: his antipathy to ego-psychology's rejection of the depth-psychological dimension of orthodox psychoanalysis in favor of a crass "ethic of adjustment;"[6] and his ready acceptance of the bourgeois, patriarchal, nuclear family as an effective bulwark against direct socialization on the part of increasingly authoritarian social institutions (mass media, schools, welfare structures, etc.) — a model which has been subject to much criticism of late.[7]

Jay proceeds to a highly informed and informative discussion of Adorno's concept of cultural criticism. From this discussion it becomes clear that Adorno, far from fetishizing an elitist, deracinated notion of high culture, as would befit an ideal-typical "mandarin intellectual," went to considerable lengths to distance himself from precisely such a conception, often employing "classical" materialist arguments against the notion of a free-floating cultural sphere. As Adorno argues in the essay "Cultural Criticism and Society," "The greatest fetish of cultural criticism is the notion of culture as such. For no authentic work of art and no true philosophy, according to their very meaning, has ever exhausted itself alone in its being-in-itself. They have always stood in relation to the actual life-processes of society from which they distinguish themselves."[8] In this respect, Adorno always maintained solidarity with Benjamin's celebrated claim that "there is no document of culture that is not simultaneously a document of barbarism."[9] Nevertheless, as Jay is careful to point out, Adorno, the inveterate dialectician, refused equally to rest content with the vulgar materialist conception of culture as an epiphenomenal reflex of social being. Instead, this reductionist perspective proved to be merely the reverse side of the elitist glorification of high culture as a sacrosanct repository of eternal spiritual values. The problem was that such blanket dismissals of the notion of cultural autonomy, be it from a materialist or pragmatic/nihilist perspective (e.g., Nietzsche), ultimately ran the risk, as a result of its extreme cynicism regarding the cultural sphere, of being in league with a spirit of barbarism whose regressive tendencies account for the greatest atrocities this century has known on both sides of the political spectrum. Clearly, whereas the naive belief in the automatically civilizing function of high culture has been permanently exploded in our century (without doubt, many SS higher-ups were great appreciators of the music of Beethoven and Schiller's poetry), the nihilistic refusal of cultural value serves conversely as a mere invitation to regression and inhumanity. It was via the dialectical tension catalyzed by these two poles that Adorno's reflections on art and culture drew their sustenance.

The pronounced cultural cynicism so prevalent in late capitalism resulted, according to Adorno, in a crisis for the traditional Hegelian and Marxist practice of immanent critique (Jay seeks to link the latter notion to the hermeneutics of Schleiermacher and

6. For an account of critical theory's critique of ego-psychology of Adler, Fromm, and Horney, see Russell Jacoby, *Social Amnesia* (Boston, 1976).

7. For example, see Carol Gilligan, *In A Different Voice* (Cambridge, 1981).

8. Adorno, "Cultural Criticism and Society," in *Prisms, op. cit.*, p. 23.

9. Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History," *Illuminations* (New York, 1969), p. 263.

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Dilthey, rather than, for example, the "dialectic of concept and object" elaborated in the Preface to Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*). The latter notion, of course, formed the basis for the Marxian conception of ideology critique, according to which in the hiatus between the conceptual self-presentation of a given social formation and its ultimately irrepressible objective character were to be found the concrete bases for the emphatic unveiling of the truth concerning given social formations. As Adorno saw it, however, so mistrustful had the majority of individuals become *vis-à-vis* all ideological attempts at self-justification on the part of the authoritarian state(s), that the objective basis for the practice of immanent or ideology criticism — the expectation that mechanisms of politico-cultural legitimation own up to certain discursive standards of "truthfulness" — seemed to be removed entirely. If Adorno's conjectures on this turn of events is correct, then the conclusions he reaches concerning a "generalized moral cynicism" under late capitalism (put simply, it is no longer the common expectation that leaders tell us the truth) would seem to entail devasting consequences for Habermas' recent attempts to reformulate the normative foundations of historical materialism (and thus ideology critique) in terms of the notion of universal pragmatics or a "discourse ethic," whereby claims to truth, sincerity, and correctness form the transcendental conditions of ordinary as well as political speech acts. Yet, Habermas himself has tacitly admitted this eventuality in *Legitimation Crisis* (1973) where he acknowledges the prevalence of a "positivistic common consciousness" which would be incapable of mature (in the Kantian sense) value-discriminations, as well as entertains seriously the cybernetic thesis of the "end of the individual," which is merely the logical corollary of the former claim.

Adorno's dissatisfaction with the historical potentials of immanent critique consequently motivated him, as Jay reveals, to take refuge in the ideal of a "transcendent criticism," i.e., a type of criticism whose objective basis would no longer lie concretely embedded in the thing itself (in this case, society), but rather in the standpoint devised by the critic. As Adorno phrased it in the concluding aphorism of *Minima Moralia:* "The only philosophy which can be practiced responsibly in face of despair is to contemplate all things as they would present themselves from the standpoint of redemption. . . . Perspectives must be fashioned that displace and estrange the world, reveal it to be, with its rifts and crevices as it will appear one day in the messianic light."[10] It was perhaps in this statement that he came closest to endorsing the itermittently theological basis for transcendent criticism pursued by his friend Benjamin. Yet, as Jay suggests, Adorno never remained satisfied with the necessity of choosing between immanent or transcendent critique. He refused to accept the alternatives as an "either-or" and strove in his own cultural criticism in effect to combine aspects of both approaches, insofar as neither, when taken alone, emerged as self-sufficient. In the contemporary historical era, he argued, successful critique would have to be mutually informed by both dimensions.

Jay's treatment of Adorno's multifarious aesthetic writings culminates with a brief account of his immense musicological oeuvre, which is slated to comprise twelve of the projected twenty-three volumes of his *Collected Works.* Here, Jay treats many of the main themes which have made Adorno's contributions to the annals of musical study in the twentieth century so unique and controversial: his suspicion of all attempts to re-assert *gemeinschaftlich* values through musical means (in different ways, Hindemuth and Weill); his view of Wagner's music as providing an anticipatory physiognomy of the totalitarian era; his partisanship for the Schoenberg school, then ultimate disenchant-

10. Adorno, *Minima Moralia* (London, 1974), p. 247.

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ment with the same resulting from the rigidification of the latter's original expressionist urges into the twelve-tone system; his critiques of *Gebrauchsmusik* (utilitarian music), the debased status of music in the culture industry, and the concomitant "regression of listening;" his rare endorsement of the category of "positive totality" in the case of Beethoven's early symphonies (an endorsement which parallels strikingly Lukács discussions of this category with reference to the literary classics of the same period or bourgeois realism). It is all in all a tremendously rich account which will serve to orient many a reader daunted by the technical sophistication and staggering breadth of Adorno's erudition in this area.

At the same time, one cannot help but wish at times that Jay had departed from the secure plane of textual exposition in the direction of a more extended critical discussion. After all, it has been at least twelve years since the Adorno-reception in the English-speaking world has been underway (ironically, an event largely inaugurated by the appearance of Jay's earlier work, *The Dialectical Imagination*), and in the interim many significant and refined exegetical surveys of Adorno's contributions have appeared. In short, one wonders if it is not time for more bold and independent treatments of Adorno's considerably formidable oeuvre, as has been the case in West Germany.[11]

One way to have surmounted this dilemma would have been to have opted for a more extensive and critical conclusion. Yet, the one that appears is disappointingly brief and hence unsatisfying. Here, citations from various critics are invoked to suggest that Adorno's rigidly anti-systematic theoretical bearing ultimately approached congealing into a system; an objection which any sensitive reading of *Negative Dialectics* or *Aesthetic Theory* would seem to rule out. It has the status of what Hegel referred to as an "external criticism," i.e., one that bypasses unreflectively the objective content of the thing itself. In addition, it is alleged that there is a repetitive character in Adorno' discourse, a recurrence of themes and motifs, that ultimately leads to a certain theoretical stagnation, bordering on "systematization." Yet, precisely how one might distinguish a criticism of this sort from the *attribute* of intellectual consistency (which, for all his polemics against traditional philosophical conceptualization, Adorno would have been quite foolish to have renounced *tout court*) remains to be seen. It is a tribute to his own sense of intellectual balance that Jay himself feels compelled to undermine the accusation of a subterranean *"esprit systématique"* in Adorno's theory. Indeed, his own account has seemingly proved the converse: "As we have had countless opportunities to observe, Adorno stubbornly resisted choosing between flawed alternatives or positing a harmonious mediation between them. Negative ontology or historicism, transcendent or immanent critique, autonomous art or art in the service of the revolution, speculative theory or empirical investigation — these and other antinomies Adorno held onto without forcing their reconciliation" (163).

Still, one cannot help but wish that the author had engaged in a bit more detail some of the more nagging questions surrounding Adorno's oeuvre: his philosophy of history, and the relation between aesthetics and theory of knowledge.

It was a direct result of Benjamin's influence on Adorno that this negative philosophy of history was espoused in the work that has become known as critical theory's most fundamental statement on questions of philosophy of history and social evolution, *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1941-44). The book is predicated on a Benjaminian reversal of Enlightenment (and Marxian) philosophies of history which suggest a direct correlation between progress in the mastery of nature and progress as such. This

11. Cf. L. von Friedeborg and J. Habermas, eds., *Adorno-Konferenz* (Frankfurt, 1983); and Albrecht Wellmer, *Die Dialektik der Moderne und Postmoderne* (Frankfurt, 1985).

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is a verdict which Horkheimer and Adorno, following Benjamin's "Theses on the Philosophy of History," stand on its head: instead, the progressive mastery of the non-human natural world is equated primarily with augmented human servitude and oppression. In this respect, the central thesis of *Dialectic of Enlightenment* manages to synthesize the vantage points of the two most sophisticated twentieth century German cultural pessimists: Freud of *Civilization and Its Discontents* and Weber of the "iron cage." Rather than resulting in "progress in the consciousness of freedom" (Hegel, *Philosophy of History*), human history is conceived of as a unilinear process leading from the domination of nature, to the domination of other men and women, to the domination of inner nature under the "culture industry" of late capitalism. Or, as Adorno expresses it in *Negative Dialectics*: "No human history leads from savagery to humanitarianism, but there is one leading from the slingshot to the megaton bomb."[12]

Here one finds a perspective in which the dialectical tensions of social evolution, and particularly those of the Enlightenment legacy, are neutered via a schema that is at times as simplistic as Enlightenment philosophies of history (e.g., Condorcet), *yet with the signs merely reversed.* Neither approach proves serviceable for attempts to think through the current historical impasse; indeed, each perspective is a type of "bad infinity," the mirror image of its contrary. What is especially dangerous about this negative philosophy of history is its insensitivity to the very real breakthroughs of the modern age, the emancipation from superstition, the (however counter-factual) institutionalization in the West of universalistic value systems, the emancipation of the value-spheres of science, morality, and art from their previous indebtedness to the willful and particularistic authority of church and state, the emergence of individualism as a value, etc. On this score, critical theory failed precisely in the realm where it believed its greatest strength lay: dialectics. Hence, the solution to the dilemma at hand would in no way be to substitute an *"apologetics of modernity"* for critical theory's disparagement of the same. Instead, both conceptions must be thought together: i.e., both the shortcomings of modernity as well as its breakthroughs, for only *on the basis of those indispensable breakthroughs* can the shortcomings themselves be countered.[13] Yet, critical theory's negative philosophy of history often suggests that, as a result of the unilaterally repressive features of modernity, the direction in which we should long should be the primal past rather than the future. For this primal past was marked by a *pre-individuated state,* prior to the invidious rift between an individuated humanity — both outwardly and inwardly repressed — and the natural world. The subterranean links between critical theory's *Kulturkritik* and the romantic anti-capitalist milieu in which it arose have yet to be fully exposed.[14]

This milieu also unquestionably exercised an inordinate influence upon Adorno's approach to the theory of knowledge, once again through the mediating link of Benjamin. Although Adorno always claimed that the hand that inflicted the wound must also be the one that heals it, and that hence the "domination of the concept" — its suppression of otherness, difference, the "non-identical" — could itself only be alleviated by conceptual means, in the end his dissatisfaction with the faculty of human ratiocination is so great that the *aesthetic sphere* tends to supersede the cognitive as the optimal

12. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics* (New York, 1973), p. 320.

13. Cf. Habermas, "Modernity versus Postmodernity," *New German Critique* 22 (Winter, 1981), pp. 3-14.

14. For one such attempt — to my way of thinking overly mechanical and hence unsatisfactory — in this direction, which tries to view Ludwig Klages as the silent impetus behind *Dialectic of Enlightenment,* see Axel Honneth, "L'esprit et son objet," in *Weimar ou l'explosion de la modernite,* G. Raulet, ed. (Paris, 1984), pp. 97-112.

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vehicle for the articulation of claims to truth. By "aesthetic sphere," Adorno really means criticism, which offers a happy medium between, on the one hand, the abstract conceptualism of discursive rationality and, on the other, the speechless immediacy of works of art themselves. This is his explicit position in *Aesthetic Theory,* which is increasingly regarded, along with *Negative Dialectics,* as his major work. A reading of the former makes it clear that aesthetics possess the capacity to offer an anticipatory, *positive image of totality*, something denied to philosophy *per se*, which in *Negative Dialectics*, seems condemned *à la* Sisyphus to brood over its past failings. "The original sin of all philosophy," remarks Adorno, "is that it attempts to grasp the non-conceptual through conceptual means." The ultimate *telos* of philosophy is hence condemned *a priori* as an excercise in futility. An enterprise tainted by original sin, moreover, is not susceptible to having its failings redressed by lowly human talents. "Disenchantment of the concept," remarks Adorno, "is the antidote of philosophy. It keeps it from growing rampant and becoming an absolute unto itself . . . our aim is total self-relinquishment."[15] The mission of philosophy is, consequently, extremely circumscribed. In keeping with the program of "negative dialectics," it is indeed a negative one. Yet, this severe limitation of the scope of philosophical reflection itself falls victim to a new set of constraints. Here, too, Adorno forsakes the dialectical heritage to which he otherwise owes much. For the "other," the "non-conceptual," the "non-identical," must in its turn not be made into a new fetish. In its condition of unadulterated immediacy, of simply being-there, it is scarcely meritorious of our intellectual allegiance. On the contrary, precisely insofar as it exists in this unredeemed, unmediated, indigent state, it necessitates, even implores judgment, rational evaluation, elevation to the level of the concept in the Hegelian sense. Here, one can see that Adorno turned his back too soon on his great German idealist forbear.

To be sure Adorno, in his moments of greater lucidity, did not intend to fetishize the non-identical. This would have been the equivalent of the crudest positivism, which Adorno always forswore. Yet, in sections of *Negative Dialectics* such as "Primacy of the Object" doubts are raised.

The solution he recommended to avoid reification of the merely existent, as such, was the Benjaminian concept of "constellation." As the metaphor suggests, by way of their absorption of the diffuse within their coordinates, constellations confer an *image-character* upon truth. That is, no longer will the latter remain purely ethereal and insubstantial, but rather through the "image" it regains some of that sensuousness that is otherwise sacrificed on the altar of conceptual abstraction. It was in this sense that Benjamin spoke of "dialectical images" as a superior road to truth. Yet, the partisanship for an approach to philosophical truth defined by an image-character bears striking resemblance to doctrines advanced by irrationalist philosophers of life of the twenties and thirties; above all, it is suggestive of the theories of Klages, who, in *Der Geist al widersacher der Seele,* a text with which Benjamin was known to have flirted, proposed a theory of "archaic images." To be sure, the parallel between Adorno's conception of "constellation," resulting from a disdain for purely logical theories of truth, and the aforementioned irrationalist philosophical currents, could be greatly overstated. Nevertheless, the kindredness is sufficient to suggest caution and ultimately suspicion with reference to some of the more extreme anti-conceptual biases of Adorno's thought as a whole.

The richness and diversity of Adorno's oeuvre suggest that these are controversies that are a long way from being settled once and for all. Once again we are indebted to

15. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics, op. cit.,* p. 13.

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the work of Martin Jay for laying important intellectual groundwork for the debates that will follow.

**Richard Wolin**

## Leonardo Boff, *Church, Charisma and Power — Liberation Theology and the Institutional Church*, trans. by John W. Diercksmeier, Crossroads Publishing Co. (New York, 1985).

This theological treatise was condemned on March 20, 1985 by The Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (formerly known as The Holy Office). The statement of public notification approved by Pope John Paul II, declared that "the options of Leonardo Boff . . . endanger the sound doctrine of the faith which this congregation must promote and protect."[1] The central theme in the book is that today the practice and structure of the Catholic Church is an obstacle to the pursuit of the Christian task in Latin America. A 35 year old Franciscan Friar, Boff is a renowned Catholic theologian in Brazil. Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, head of the Congregation, had already launched an investigation of Boff's opinions and called him to Rome for questioning. But prior to the conclusion of the inquiry, Boff was condemned to a year of "penitential silence" for his "doctrinal errors and deviations." He could not speak publicly, defend his ideas or write. He had to remove himself from the *Brazilian Ecclesiastical Review* (REB) which he edited at Petropolis, a town outside Rio de Janeiro.

In Chapters 4 and 5 Boff argues that the Church is an authoritarian institution characterized by an ideology of power (*Potestas*), the Papacy being absolute "Power." This Church sees itself as the only voice of God's revelation and already in possession of fully formed absolute truths. In terms of its structure, a privileged minority controls the means of religious production, has all the power and determine all official discourse. Thus, the Church is organized like the Communist Party in Russia and stands opposed to the living faith of the people. Moreover, the Pope's relation to other members of the hierarchy is similar to that between the secretary general and other hierarchical elements in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union before the Chinese revolution. He, too, according to tradition, is the infallible guide in politics and, according to dogma, the infallible interpreter of all doctrines.

It is not surprising, therefore, that while human dignity was exhalted in words and Church doctrine supportive of equality, Church practice represented a violation of human rights. All the faithful outside the hierarchy's closed circle were marginalized. The laity were expected to be silent and obedient in the face of all reality — including Church reality. Thus, Catholics were left without creativity, imagination, fantasy, prophecy and joy. Among the laity, women were considered incompetent to deal with any of the executive functions of the Church. Even priests were denied the right of thinking, organizing and deciding for themselves. Those who dared to disagree were severely disciplined, no longer by torture, but by being silenced. Moreover, the accused could have no lawyer, or voice in his own defence.

1. *New York Times*, March 21, 1985.

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Boff does not deny the necessity of authority and institutionalization in the Christian community. What he rejects is the persistence of this particular form of authority and practice derived from the Roman Empire and Feudal society despite the emergence of alternative models. Thus, this Church finds itself marginalized and ignored by the world and, when attacked, defends itself in a most opportunistic manner. This critique of the authoritarian aspects of the Catholic Church has been around for a long time. What is new here is that the denunciation and demand for democratization stems from within the Church itself.

One of the strengths of Boff's book is that his concept of a new Church-form is no mere imaginative excursion to utopia. It is based on real changes in the Latin American Church. Even if the old Church is far from superseded, there is much to support his argument. The broad commitment of the Latin American Church to the more general value of liberation for the poor and oppressed is well known. The Church's strong position on economic questions and its critique of dictatorships has, since the late sixties, been well publicized. This is a massive historical task, given the growing rate of mass marginalization in Latin America.

But this denunciation of oppressive economic and cultural conditions must not, in Boff's view, be seen in terms of a paternal hierarchy reaching out to help the poor. In Chapter 1, he summarizes what is the general assumption in liberation theology concerning the mechanism of oppression. The particular historical circumstances that generate their condition — dependent and associated development of underdevelopment — requires a long term strategy. The situation calls for "a liberation that guarantees a self-sustained development which attends the real needs of the people rather than the consumption needs of the rich countries and the national strata associated with them." The historical subject of this liberation is not the Church hierarchy but the oppressed people. "They must elaborate a consciousness of their condition as oppressed persons, organize themselves and engage in practices designed to bring about an alternative society, one that is less dependent, less prone to injustice.While other classes may and ought to incorporate themselves in the project of the oppressed, they must do so, however, without seeking a hegemonic status."

Boff implies, therefore, a very definite subordination of the institutionalized church and all other class interests within it, to the demands of the oppressed. This commitment means "privileging the poor (without any exclusivity) as the new emerging historical subject which will referentially realize the Christian project in the world. . . . It is not a Church that exists for the poor, but is of the poor and with the poor." The poor are not the object of charity or assistance but a political force: "the popular classes are the new emerging historical subjects who will probably define the direction of future society." It is in and through this option for the poor and insertion in their reality that the Church of the faithful should define itself.

All this is now possible because of the appearance in large numbers of dynamic and democratic communities in the base of the Church and society. Known as base communities, these are not another mere instrument of the Church, or another form of Catholic action. They are rather a "new and original form of living the Christian faith, or organizing the community in terms of the Word, the sacraments (when possible) and the new ministries exercised by the laity (women and men)." In groups of fifteen and twenty families, Christians create their own prayers, decide communally and speak after centuries of silence. The communities are the base source of prophetic denunciation and the instrument of liberation. Through the formation of religious consciousness, the faithful grasp the structures that produce injustices thereby making

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the transition from a merely religious consciousness to a political one and organize themselves for an alternative society. There are some 70,000 of them already composed of four million persons.

This new form of organization within the Church allows for decentralization and democratization at all levels. The emphasis here is on the Church as movement rather than as institution. Indeed "*ecclesia*" (church) he argues, did not originally imply continuity but was simply an event: a happening rather than an institution. It is the resurrected Christ and the Holy Spirit who provoke the community of the faithful to gather and celebrate their faith, deepen their analysis of the kingdom, the world and the Church. In this militant subjective movement, charisma is the new principle of organization compared with the hierarchical bureaucratic offices of the past. The presence of the Spirit is manifest in the plurality of gifts, or charismas. All persons in the community have some charisma, and so there is a circulation of ministries and responsibilities and gifts. This allows a participation on the part of all unlike the present structure in which only the bishops, priests and deacons are active subjects. Charisma in such a community, Boff insists, does not represent a principle of domination but,imbued with the principle of love, charisma is at the service of all.

If all Christians, as Vatican II recommends, are to participate in the magisterium of the Church, then for Boff there must be a new relation between the hierarchy and the laity that make up the community of the faithful. Power must recognize its own limits in a new structure. 1. There should be frank dialogue between both parts of the Church. 2. Only a mutual attitude of criticism will inhibit all absolutisms. 3. The Church does not exist for itself but in relation to the world and the Holy Spirit.Consequently, the Church has to recognize these points of reference outside of the hierarchy and the laity that compose it. In Brazil, there have been four national encounters of the base communities since 1975. The Christian experience and the faithful's reflection on that experience is the inspiration for the theologian who "listens and learns more than speaks and teaches." As for the hierarchy there are times when they "ought to hear, listen to the Scriptures, be attentive to the signs of the times, to the clamor of the poor that rises to the heavens and discern the will of God for all; there is also the moment in which the lay person has to speak and give witness to the truth of the gospel within the social system in which he or she lives. . . . Each one is master and disciple one of the other and of all followers of the gospel." This empowerment of the Christian community requires a circular relation between Bishop, priest, deacon and laity. Only then can there be a full participation, on the part of all, in a Church characterized by dialogue, collegiality, service and an openess to a multi-tendency theology.

Thus, the Christian critique of secular societies in terms of practice, cultural forms, economic and political structures, is here turned with even greater immediacy on the Church itself. Not content with the church reform of Vatican II, which he sees as hegemonic within most of Latin America, Boff must be seen as representing a more radical faction of the avant-garde Church. Indeed, the book must be seen in the context of a struggle for the minds of religious elites.

Boff writes in a very difficult language. His book cannot be read except by a well educated clergy, laity and interested secular scholars. The Brazilian Catholic elite has already come a long way in recognizing the claims of liberation theology on the economic and political front and is now being asked to go one step further and formulate a concept of *religious* liberation. Thus, the Vatican condemnation is a broadside which initiated a counter-revolution within the Latin American Church. The conservatives who in recent years had been somewhat subdued in their public statements,

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remained a strong minority and are currently on the rebound supported by similar elements in Europe and the U.S.

In Chapters 7 and 8 Boff argues that Catholicism was not "given" once and for all at any time in history. "It is a cultural artifact, produced by the cultural activity of human beings inspired by God. It is, on the one hand, a gift of God and, on the other, a human construction that can be studied and described in terms of its moments and processes." What then are the preconditions of this Church and by what processes does it develop its culture and institutions? The Christian experience which has been conserved in the Christian scriptures and read and re-read across history has always been regarded as and continues to be the Church's foundation. This precondition is not reducible to any other factor.

But this Church is always "limited and orientated by a social context characterized by a certain population, specific resources and structured in a definite form." The point however, Boff argues, is that if we assume that the mode of production is the organizational axis of any society then the Church is conditioned by this also. This is so even if it has a specific content of its own and is an autonomous part of social reality. Now, because the Church is in a world of classes, the faithful occupy distinct positions in that world and interpret the gospel message in a manner that is consonant with the interests, needs and values of their own class. Of course, in every class society there is a dominant class that seeks to establish an ideological consensus and to incorporate the Church in the service of the legitimation of its domination. These two preconditions, however, generate a contradiction within the Church. Its basic ideation calls for a mode of production that is symmetrical, fraternal and characterized by the full participation of freely cooperating individuals. On the other hand, the Church is realized historically in an asymmetrical mode of production. Consequently, there is always the possibility of prophetic denunciation and the eruption of the spirit of liberty among those who seek justice and organize for a revolutionary transformation. Historically, the Church has been both a factor in the consolidation of hegemonic block and a revolutionary force.

Now when the Church functions in a subordinate manner to the interests of the hegemonic block in any class society it becomes inhibited, distorted and develops pathological forms of behavior. The one, holy, Catholic and apostolic Church has come to mean uniformity, holy obedience to the bishops who alone are seen as the successors of the apostles while the concept of Catholicism refers only to a numerical reality. How, then, is Catholicism produced and the faith embodied in the world? In Chapter 7, Boff argues that the Church was syncretic from the very beginning. As the gospel penetrates all regions of life, the faith is continually adapting itself to every new human culture and religion. Thus, the form of the Church is a function of a syncretic development based on the cultural and religious ecumenism of those who believe. There is no one theology, he insists, which has been fixed for all time. Boff distinguishes religion and faith as two moments of praxis. Religion is a specific historical form resulting from the encounter of the "word" with "non-word" whereas real Catholicity is found in the oneness of faith. This concept of religious progression is very important in Brazil where popular religiosity is so much a function of religious syncretism.[2]

2. I omit any summary of Boff's interesting theological arguments (Chapter 11 especially). They are quite refined and based on scripture, church history and tradition. Indeed, one of the more subtle aspects of this part of his argument is the use made of quotations from Pope John Paul II. The Pope is often contradictory in that he speaks in a populist manner to the mass

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It is difficult to criticize someone who is presently being denied his right to free speech by the Church. However, support for the oppressed, Church democratization and solidarity with those whose rights are violated, are not sufficient reasons for suspending judgement. Thus, the either/or character of Boff's analysis is extremely problematic. Social life and personal existence is formulated in terms of valued essences identified as revolutionary or reactionary. This moral emphasis can only distort all analytical forms of thought employed making them a function of "good" and "bad" in a mythical cosmos.

Moreover his theory of the forms of thought is extremely simplistic and reductionist. Of the two conditions of consciousness, faith is given little room for determination since every aspect of Christian life is either for or against the hegemonic or subordinate classes. There is no room for a Church that in pursuing its own religious interests, has unintended consequences in the economic, political, and cultural spheres in secular society. Indeed, secular society, when considered in the light of the principle of faith, has no independent existence. All reality is enveloped in one mystical aura. Consequently, the range of political alliances is confined to the ideologicaly pure, and the range of social practice reduced to what is termed radical. All else is inadequate or "bad."

In this sense, the dependency model which is the preferred explanation of the oppressed conditions of the poor and justification for the need of a full scale transformation of all reality, is ideally suited to Boff's theology. Through this model, long-since discredited in analytical circles, it is not the real problematic of dependency, nor the most concrete and differentiated structures of oppressive reality that receive attention. On the contrary, the believer is lost in a world of abstract forces, good and evil, full of self-rightousness and moral denunciation.

Moreover, Boff seems to assume that this militant Christianity is related to historical revolutionary trends in South America. The signs of the times perceived through the eyes of faith, indicate revolution from below. Thus, there is an identity between the revolutionary Third World movement embedded in the logic of history and Christian commitment. However, while no one can deny the oppressive reality of Brazil, there is no revolutionary movement in evidence even if there are many different self-defined revolutionary groups. There is no clear trend that one can identify as representative of the "subordinate classes." Insofar as one can perceive any structure to their desires and aspirations, electoral results in the major Brazilian cities indicate support for a relatively conservative reform. True, the military regime is completely discredited. But even though radical groups have a more vocal presence in the controlled environment of redemocratization, they seem to be losing some of the support they had developed in the years of greatest repression. As a very visible force in the confrontation of the hated military regime, this minority gained great respect. But now this very same practice generates fears of a return of the military.

On the other hand, the concept of the "poor" or of the "people" is far too vague. If by this is meant the blue and white collar working class, there is certainly no way one can automatically assume that democratic movements for unions, wages and so on imply a revolutionary direction. If by "poor" is meant the marginalized, then the revolutionary character of the "poor" is even harder to believe. As for the "poor" in the countryside, there can be no doubt concerning their interest in "land reform" or the allocation of land based on a division of vast unused territories in Brazil. But who

gatherings while wielding a big disciplinarian and conservative stick when dealing with clergy and nuns. Therefore, he can often be quoted to suit very different arguments.

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believes they could overthrow powers and structures based on modern urban Brazil even if they were to consider such a project? So the "poor" and "oppressed" while expected to be the revolutionary *subject*, are not the real source of the revolutionary *project*. They are merely the basis of an imputed interest deduced from an analysis of their condition and the mechanisms that generate it.

This approach turns out to be a mechanical paradigm which fails to explain the real ideological and political developments in the Third World where the problematic of dependency is only one factor. Moreover, when combined with an assumption of the necessary direction of history (according to the signs of the times) the "poor" are the subject that will determine the future of society, then we are looking at a belief in a subjective historical agency combined with the most thoroughgoing fatalism.

All that remains for the "poor" is that they be socialized in a specific revolutionary set of beliefs. Once internalized, the revolution will be the prevailing moral imperative of their everyday life. This is, of course, pure idealism. Where is this revolutionary world view to come from? Clearly an unemployed slum dweller or a brutalized union organizer does not develop a "dependency theory."

We have come full swing within the Church. For this theoretical task is still a function of elites within the Catholic Church who know the scriptures, theology and secular analytical models, and who crystallize and identify what the "poor" actually experience. A new imposed uniformity of thought and action is a real possibility Boff seems to ignore. The same Christian experience of oppression can be wrapped in revolutionary, reformist and conservative forms. Indeed, old-fashioned Christian "charity" and sentimental liberalism have not yet been completely swept under the carpet. But the prevailing paradigm chosen for circulation among the base communities is decided and articulated by a leadership group in the Church. It only *appears* to emanate from the base.

Yet another problem is that Boff never specifies the outcome of the revolutionary transformation in anything like the terms used to denounce secular and religious oppression. The structure of the movement for liberation and democratization within the Church is clearly formulated. As for the alternative society, we only know it will be a golden age of political, material, cultural and spiritual well-being in which the Spirit will be identical with the world. We do not know the economic and political structure intended by this liberation christianity but are expected to make some assumptions based on its form and practice as a movement. Since the critique of the Church is combined with a critique of capitalist economics and the communist vertical power structure, Boff rejects all modern forms as they actually exist. We are asked to commit ourselves to a movement against all institutions. But Boff does not have a specified vision of his own; all is movement, becoming, continuous struggle. Given the terrible consequences of revolution as well as reaction in this century, and the great variety of historical models of institutions, structures and movements we can now study, it behooves all who propose a revolutionary movement to actually specify the contours of any new society they propose and how they expect to get there.

This treatise on the Catholic Church is above all else directed at the conversion of the Christian elite to a radical commitment to religious and world transformation. It is, as the original sub-title points out, "a study in militant ecclesiology." Boff is therefore more clearly interested in the reader being of "radical mind" than anything else. The emphasis on total world transformation is merely an externalization of the internal process of mental conversion to a complete and unreserved insertion in a movement and a blind faith in the forces of history.

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Should this Church structure prevail in Latin America it would have an impact on many other institutionalized areas of life since the Church is one of the most important cultural institutions in the continent. The experience of democracy and decentralization could provoke demands of a similar kind in the corporatist economy and state. This is especially the case since long periods of dictatorship (which helped the more radical factions within the Church to gain influence) have had the effect of rearing generations of an apolitical secularized middle class. In this context, a highly politicized Christian laity takes on great significance.

However, it is possible that the Church will indeed undergo such a radical transformation as Boff envisages? One of Boff's opponents, Bishop Kloppenburg, was happy to see him silenced. He reminded reporters of Hans Küng, a Swiss theologian who lost his chair at the University of Tübingen in 1979 for harboring similar notions. And, he pointed out, no one hears of Hans Küng anymore.[3]

Yet in Latin America, and especially Brazil, unlike Europe, the Christian critique of both the secular world and the form of the Catholic Church can count among its ardent supporters many cardinals, bishops, a great number of clergy, nuns and most of the lay activists. While the conservative counter-revolution has met with a relative silence, this response may reflect the strength rather than the weakness of the new democratic and cultural practice that is deeply entrenched in lay and clerical circles.

The Vatican approach, reasserting an absolute dogma, a hierarchical clerical control of sacramental church-goers, can only polarize the Church. But assuming such a schism is not about to take place, it is difficult to imagine how the permanent bureaucrat, the full time cleric will not rule in the community of the faithful even when there is "frank dialogue" and mutual criticism is approved. In other words, Boff's willingness to retain a full time clergy and episcopate takes most of the sting out of his critique of the vertical Church and annunciation of an egalitarian christianity.

**Patrick M. Hughes**

3. See *Veja*, May 15, 1985, p. 67.

## Robert Bellah, Richard Madsen, William Sullivan, Ann Swidler, and Stephen Tipton, *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1985)

Perhaps no work which describes the American people is so comprehensive as Toqueville's *Democracy in America.* Bellah et. al. rely heavily upon Toqueville in *Habits of the Heart* in exploring how the mores of the American people have helped to shape national character.[1] More particularly, they are interested in how Americans attempt "to preserve or create a morally coherent life" (p. 275). But unlike Toqueville for whom

1. The title is literally a phrase from Toqueville's *Democracy in America* and refers to these mores "which include consciousness, culture, and the daily practices of life." Further references to *Habits of the Heart* appear in parentheses in the text.

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the issue of equality was central, Bellah and his co-authors focus their attention on American individualism which "may be destroying those social integuments that Toqueville saw as moderating its more destructive potentialities" (p. viii).

They reach this conclusion through approximately 20 interviews designed to elicit the nature of the "resources Americans have for making sense of their lives, how they think about themselves and their society, and how their ideas relate to their actions" (p. x). Swidler considered issues pertaining to love and marriage in and around San Jose, California — a heterogeneous community to which most people migrated from other areas — Tipton explored the views of people in the mental health community of one large Southern city and in the San Francisco Bay Area; Madsen studied the nature of community in suburbs of Boston and San Diego; and Sullivan examined two political organizations, the Institute for the Study of Civic Values, a community organizing venture based in Philadelphia and the Campaign for Economic Democracy which originated in California and is based primarily in the city of Santa Monica.[2]

All those interviewed were drawn from the white middle-class since, according to Bellah and his co-authors, it is this stratum of the population that "defines reality" in the United States. Unfortunately, throughout *Habits of the Heart,* the authors tend to lose sight of their "sample population" and pretend to speak for all Americans. Nevertheless, despite this limitation, they are both comprehensive and generous in their discussion of the nature of American individualism. They view themselves as "participant observers" and refer to their interviews as "dialogues" in order to differentiate their work from most mainstream "value free" American social scientists. In addition, weaving together observations drawn from sociology, history, and philosophy, they seek "to renew an older conception of social science" (pp. 297-298) as a holistic discipline with moral concerns — a tradition undermined in the twentieth century by the growth of the narrowly specialized research university.

Far too many Americans, they argue, fail to comprehend "the larger interdependencies in which people live, geographically, occupationally, and politically" (p. 250). This failure makes it difficult to create a moral perspective that transcends the importance placed upon individual self-interest and personal choice. In referring to contemporary "modes of moral discourse," Bellah and his co-authors distinguish the "dominant" "first language" of individualism from "second languages," "primarily biblical and republican" (p. 334) that are more communal in nature and used less frequently. According to them, a major fear today is that the cultivation of social commitments will erode personal independence. This does not mean that social authority has completely vanished. As they indicate, in contemporary America people are inclined to look to their immediate surroundings for personal confirmation. Those interviewed tended to measure themselves against "the gross standards of income, consumption, and conformity to rational procedures for attaining ends" (p. 149). "Feeling good" has become the highest aim for most people as moral problems have become subsumed within a calculus of individual needs and satisfactions.

Throughout *Habits of the Heart,* the authors speak disparagingly of today's "absolutely empty unencumbered and improvisational self," a state of being which "obscures personal reality, social reality, and particularly the moral reality that links person and society" (p. 80). Americans, they argue, tend to be "limited to a language of radical individual autonomy . . . they cannot think about themselves or others except

2. Though each of the authors presented "drafts" of various chapters of the book, Bellah was "responsible for the final rewriting" of *Habits of the Heart.*

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as arbitrary centers of volition" (p. 81). The world into which they are "integrated is defined only by the spasmodic transition between striving and relaxing and is without qualitative distinctions of time and space, good and evil, meaning and meaninglessness" (p. 281). Though most value freedom, they are likely to stress that which inhibits them in their daily lives, thereby revealing their "stubborn fear of acknowledging structures of power and interdependence" (p. 5). A "pure" "contentless" freedom results as commitments wane and spontaneity is over-emphasized. Similarly, in considering justice, Americans are better able to describe "procedural justice," which involves equal opportunities to pursue their own intersts, than "distributive justice" which requires a fair allocation of economic resources. There is even less of a vocabulary for "substantive justice" which is a matter of "the institutional order of society as a whole" (p. 334).

In criticizing the current emphasis upon the self, the authors explore its roots in the past. Like other critics, they have created a typology to describe the transformation of the American national character. Thus, for example, Riesman, Wheelis, and Lifton have pointed to the relatively rigid "inner-directed," "old," social character of the nineteenth century which has been replaced by the more flexible "other-directed," "new," "protean" type of the more recent past.[3] In attempting to account for this transformation, each of these social critics has delineated the breakdown of community which resulted from increasing urbanization, industrial expansion, technological growth, and the proliferation of bureaucracies.

Similarly, throughout *Habits of the Heart,* the authors suggest that before the nineteenth century a sense of community prevailed in America. Earlier notions of individualism were grounded in a religious or social framework that required a commitment to the public good. Bellah et. al. distinguish the "biblical" from the "republican" strand: They point to John Winthrop (the puritan who was the first governor of Massachusetts) for whom the idea of community was rooted in ethical as well as religious precepts centering on justice and responsibility; and Thomas Jefferson whose faith in the integrity of the independent farmer was the basis for his belief in civic participation. Since the nineteenth century, the power of these respective visions has waned as Americans have repeatedly challenged economic and political constraints and have come to subscribe to a vision of the self beyond the confines of established institutional life. Bellah et. al. emphasize the intellectual origin of this vision in John Locke who believed that the individual existed prior to society. Society could only be created when people came together on the basis of their self-interest, which Locke defined as an outgrowth of their individual desires. If, for Locke, the self was the primary reality, his perspective underscored the fundamental equality between people which helped to erode the "intolerable discrimination and oppression" (p. 144) of the past. Locke's perspective is reflected in the life and work of Benjamin Franklin and Walt Whitman who embody the two major American forms of individualism. There is, first, Franklin's "utilitarian individualism," whereby the pursuit of one's interests and goals increases social prosperity. His practical orientation displeased some Americans committed to a "deeper expression of the self" (p. 33). In this context, Bellah et. al. refer to Whitman as the precursor of today's stress on "expressive individualism" where success is not so much a matter of "material acquisition" as a "life rich in experience, open to all kinds of people,

3. See David Riesman, Nathan Glazer, and Reuel Denney, *The Lonely Crowd: A Study of the Changing American Character* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1950); Alan Wheelis, *The Quest for Identity* (New York: Norton, 1958); Robert Jay Lifton, "Protean Man," *Partisan Review,* 35 (1968).

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luxuriating in the sensual as well as the intellectual" (p. 34). Here there is great concern "about the integrity of the self" in opposition to "modern bureaucratic organization" (p. 149).

The emphasis on the "unencumbered self" is especially revealed in the way Americans view the "life course" as a process of separating oneself physically and psychologically from one's earliest caretakers. The authors dwell on the consequences of becoming a fully autonomous agent — a process which often takes place at the expense of the need to rely on and care for others. But in pointing to the necessity to acknowledge both the urge to become autonomous and the need for connection, the authors do not discuss these issues in psychological depth, nor do they adequately deal with the related issue of gender.

As Gilligan has indicated, it is men rather than women who place such a heavy emphasis on becoming autonomous.[4] Bellah et. al. acknowledge women's traditional emphasis on establishing altruistic relations. But they are overly concerned about the fact that women today are often encouraged "to be conscious primarily of [their] assertive selves" (p. 111). Here, however, the authors do not indicate that women are still affected by the old perspective stressing their capacity to serve others. In this context, they fail to explore the psychological costs of traditional arrangements in which women were assigned the task of nurturance.

As Kohut has remarked, the emphasis on autonomy in America, particularly by ego psychologists, is "part of a supraordinated moral system in scientific disguise," perfectly attuned to the prevailing values of western civilization which elevate the capacity to be self-sufficient and shun the inclination to become dependent.[5] Kohut would agree with Bellah that "absolute independence is a false ideal. It delivers not the autonomy it promises but loneliness and vulnerability instead" (p. 247).

But the authors of *Habits of the Heart* never make adequate use of the psychoanalysis. Unlike Lasch whose analysis of American society is rooted in a psychoanalytic understanding of the individual's need for both "oneness and separation," Bellah et. al. are more successful when they deal with the broad social consequences of the failure to acknowledge human interdependence. Even if many of their observations concerning their interviews are poignant reminders of the fragility as well as the strength of the American people, Bellah et. al. confine themselves to socialization. Their repeated disclaimer that their "focus" is "not psychological, or even primarily sociological, but rather cultural" (p. x) does not serve them well. Since *Habits of the Heart* deals with American individualism and relies so heavily on personal disclosure, it is unfortunate that they did not sufficiently pursue the psychological dimension.

Thus, one of their concerns is that the urge to become autonomous is tied to accumulating personal wealth, power, and fame. But they never explore the nature of the archaic grandiosity that may be aroused in this quest. For Lasch, as for Bellah et. al., the manager is one of the major prototypes of individual success. But Lasch details not only the nature of the manipulation of others that the manager often engages in but shows how this resonates with deeper layers of the personality, itself the product of questionable child-rearing practices. Unfortunately, Bellah et. al. remain content to describe the contours of the manager's tasks "to persuade, inspire, manipulate, cajole and intimidate" (p. 45). They are extremely concerned with what ultimately affects

4. Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1982).

5. Heinz Kohut, *How Does Analysis Cure?* ed. Arnold Goldberg and Paul Stepansky (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), p. 208.

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personal life detrimentally. Nevertheless, they do not pursue the psychological implications of this style of response and focus instead on its moral consequences — the erosion "of both personal virtue and public good" (p. 127).

In arguing for the elevation of the moral sense, Bellah et. al. fail to consider this issue in a psychological context. For them, moral concerns are tied to styles of perception and behavior governed solely by conscious choice. They never refer to the ego ideal — that image of ourselves which we aspire to become. The ideal originates in the initial parental identifications, especially with the mother, and exerts a force on all later aspirations to the extent to which they unconsciously reflect the desire to recreate the earliest sense of infantile union and bliss. Nor do they ever utilize the psychoanalytic conception of the superego, which suggests that personal virtue requires acts of emotional suppression involving the binding of powerful aggressive impulses. Unlike Lasch, whose pleas for the reconstruction of American society acknowledge "the links between the highest and lowest forms of mental life, between the most exalted aspirations for spiritual transcendence and the earliest illusions of omnipotence and self-sufficiency," Bellah et. al. have little sense of the ambiguities involved in their call for a moral awakening.[6]

In *Habits of the Heart*, the necessity for a major ethical transformation is central. Whereas in the past, work was often a "calling," which involved a commitment to the public good, today work is valued much more as a means toward individual success. If building a "career" has become the prime concern among professionals, for many Americans, particularly those confined to routinized labor, work is meaningless beyond monetary considerations. For them, the creation of a rich private life is essential. This often involves settling into a "life style enclave," today's form of collective support which consists of people "socially, economically, or culturally similar" (p. 72). Bellah et. al. contrast this "narcissism of similarity" with the idea of community which was prevalent in the past when people sought more of "an inclusive whole, celebrating the interdependence of public and private life" (p. 72). Remnants of the past remain in the nostalgia for the intimacy of the small town which was expressed by many of those interviewed.

It is this nostalgia that calls into question the inclination of Americans to "extol" "autonomy and self-reliance" (p. 84). As Bellah et. al. indicate, Americans "do not imagine that a good life can be lived alone" (p. 84). There is widespread desire for close relations with other people. In fact, the "interpersonal" has become the "key to much of life" (p. 113). Nevertheless, whereas before the twentieth century kinship relations, religious commitments, and civic responsibility often provided a stable social matrix, today personal ties tend to be more contractual and therefore transient. In the middle class, since many people tend to be calculating and ambitious, others are often viewed as a means toward personal growth or economic success. In this context, Bellah et. al., like Philip Rieff, speak of the emergence of a "therapeutic culture" where the intimate and instrumental are joined as individuals search for "intense" but "limited" relations which demand "acute insight, sympathy, and calculation between people" (pp. 118, 130).[7] Within this perspective of "interpersonally enlightened self-interest," each person "faces cost-benefit 'trade offs' in satisfying some wants at the expense of others" (pp. 135, 129). The use of a market metaphor suggests that the therapeutic emphasis

6. Christopher Lasch, *The Minimal Self: Psychic Survival in Troubled Times* (New York: Norton, 1984), p. 179.

7. See his *The Triumph of the Therapeutic: Uses of Faith after Freud* (New York: Harper and Row, 1966).

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on the discovery of feelings, the definition of values, and the creation of a set of viable options is "a textbook description of decision making in a school of management" (p. 128). Bellah et. al. state that this vision is a reflection of the tendencies of "modern liberalism, in which an individualistic and egalitarian society emphasizes each person's rights and liberties, held in balance by contractual negotiation and reciprocal exchange" (p. 127). Since "the therapeutically inclined" fear "reason-giving moral argument as inevitably leading to either conflict or coercion," they rely on a set of "minimal procedural rules and obligations" (pp. 140-141) to adjudicate disputes.

Speaking of the traditional view of love and marriage which stresses the need for obligation, the authors state that it too has succumbed to the "law of exchange" of consumer capitalism. As Russell Jacoby put it, even family relations "are appraised with an eye on the psychic bank account; spending must balance earnings."[8] This attitude is encouraged by the growth of a therapeutic perspective which stresses spontaneity, the natural expression of feelings, and the satisfaction of personal needs. Sacrifice is shunned. Obligations that go beyond the wishes of the partners are generally frowned upon. The possibility of an enduring commitment diminishes as the "vicissitudes" of "subjectivity" (p. 90) come to define each intimate relation.

Despite the degree to which this perspective permeates American society, Bellah et. al. state that "Americans are seldom as selfish as the therapeutic culture urges them to be" (p. 112). They suggest that most Americans are caught between the "ideals of obligation and freedom" (p. 102). Acknowledging the value of the emphasis on expression in the therapeutic attitude, the authors speak positively of the way overly rigid and authoritarian "traditionalists" have come to see the value of communicating feelings. Similarly, they applaud those who view the family as a source of stability in their pursuit of intense, open relations. Nevertheless, the authors believe that the family is a "fragile" institution, "no longer an integral part of a larger moral ecology tying the individual to community, church, and nation" (pp. 110, 112). Though they look favorably upon the increasing number of options available to people seeking intimacy with others, they are concerned that personal allegiances rarely transcend the world of close, intimate relations. Under the best circumstances, the sense of possessing "a shared history" which is central to a love relation is defined in the context of the "private struggles over feelings, disconnected from any larger community of memory or meaning" (p. 104). Thus, the limit of "serious altruism" tends to be "the family circle" (p. 122) or one's tiny world of friends and "significant others."

Bellah et. al. are aware of the fact that our present emphasis on "radical individualism" is a reaction to the constraints of a "restricted past." They acknowledge that "no tradition and no community in the United States is above criticism, and the test of the criticism is usually the degree to which the community or tradition helps the individual to find fulfillment" (p. 154). American individualism, then, "is not to be rejected but transformed by reconnecting it to the public realm" (p 248). Americans, however, have "jettisoned" too much of their history, particularly those aspects which provide a sense of community to combat the current "language of the isolated self." The authors do not believe that the therapeutic worldview can account for "the nature and purpose of personal and public life" "beyond the limits of enlightened self-interest, the social contract, and a minimal obligation not to injure" (p. 128). This perspective encourages a careless relativism which denies the possibility for moral consensus. Moreover, given the therapeutic emphasis on the importance of openness and honesty, politics tends to be avoided because of common corrupt practices.

8. See his "The Politics of Narcissism," *Humanities in Society,* n. 3 (1980), p. 196.

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All that is asked for in the "ideal therapeutic world" is a set of "impersonal bureaucratic rules" to "guarantee free access to market choices and the opportunity for empathic communication in open and intense interpersonal relations"(p. 133). At most, a utilitarian concept of community is advanced so that the needs of individuals can be fulfilled. Friends, then, are viewed as part of "personal support networks." Community groups are primarily a means to find "significant others." Bellah et. al. are deeply concerned about the failure of this perspective to move beyond the " 'giving-getting' mode" (p. 138). They seek a less contractual language in which the moral content of relations, particularly "agreed-upon standards of right and wrong" (p. 140), is elevated in importance, not in an authoritarian manner as in the past, but as a "living tradition" to be utilized critically. Here, however, they are not precise when they attempt to define "the language of the common good" that would "adjudicate between conflicting wants and interests" (p. 207). They refer to the need for "communities of memory" in which people acknowledge a "shared history of love and suffering." This requires participating "in the practices — ritual, aesthetic, ethical — that define the community as a way of life" (p. 154). These "practices of commitment" are based, in part, on the "exemplary" contributions of its members whose deeds within the family, the local community, a specific region, or even the entire nation, are continually recalled. To promote this vision, the authors speak of the necessity to reappropriate continually the biblical and republican traditions which they hope "will have the capacity to reformulate themselves while simultaneously remaining faithful to their own deepest insights" (p. 144). This "largely protestant cultural center" is our richest resource since it rejected "both chaotic openness and authoritarian closure" (p. 155). Here the self is believed to be constituted through an active engagement with others publicly and privately "in work, love, and learning" (p. 84).

But unlike in the past when religion was inextricably tied to the public order through the "established church," today the churches have become "protected and withdrawn islands of piety" (p.223). Like the family, the church has become a "haven in a heartless world" by promoting "a vague generalized benevolence" (p. 224). Often it simply reinforces that world in a therapeutic manner by caring for the "casualties" of utilitarian individualism. Bellah et. al. suggest that religious faith resembles therapeutic practice since, in both realms, choice is generally considered to be an individual matter and does not require organizational and institutional involvement. For the religious, too, the self is often the primary source of meaning. The authors are especially alarmed about the growth of spiritual and mystical practices which lend credence to this view whose primary aim is the enhancement of individual well-being. But they are also concerned about the sectarian nature of traditional religion which views the secular world as too sinful to influence except minimally from without. Moreover, within mainstream religion, the use of the Bible to provide ethical guidance is generally confined to personal issues while larger social problems are likely to be ignored. The church, then, is a community primarily insofar as it provides personal support to individuals who are similarly situated both ethnically and economically.

Unlike highly privatized current religious practices, Bellah et. al. seek a more public, national conception that would constrain the excesses of American individualism, especially the "therapeutic thinning out of belief" (p. 239). They seek to relate "biblical faith and practice to the whole of contemporary life" not through the imposition of "external and oppressive" authority, but as "something one can participate in" (pp. 237, 247). Thus, they call for the creation of a public church that would actively engage the

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world. Their concept of churches of various denominations working in concert with one another in opposition to the excesses of utilitarian and expressive individualism is a generous (if perhaps unrealistic) solution to the problem.

For Bellah et. al., "the tension between self-reliant competitive enterprise and a sense of public solidarity espoused by civic republicans has been the most important unresolved problem in American history" (p. 256). In the past fifty years, they argue, there have been a number of unsuccessful attempts to reconcile these commitments. Either government has been viewed as a means to allow individuals to pursue their own private ends, as has been the case with Roosevelt's welfare liberalism and Reagan's neocapitalism; or a vision has been promoted which could lead to despotism, however unintended, as might result if Rohatyn's "administered society" or Harrington's democratic socialism are ever implemented. To solve the current problems, Bellah et. al. call for the strengthening of voluntary associations to withstand the enormous power of the state and the corporation. They wish to bring "a sense of citizenship into the operation of the government" and applaud such attempts as the Institute for the Study of Civic Values in Pennsylvania and the Campaign for Economic Democracy in California which have moved in this direction by linking local and national needs. They are opposed to nationalization and would like "to encourage new initiatives in economic democracy and social responsibility, whether from 'private' enterprise or autonomous small — and middle — scale public enterprises" (p. 287). Here their views echo sentiments that have been expressed by liberal democrats such as Tom Hayden.

Yet, they are too facile when they seek to strengthen the prestige of the government by basing it on "substantive commitments" as opposed to "formal efficiency" (p. 211). For they do not examine carefully enough the perilous course of American politics during the last decade in which legitimate authority has been seriously eroded. In this context, their discussion of Reagan's neocapitalism is much too brief. They acknowledge the fact that "the level of public political discourse" must be raised "so that fundamental problems are addressed rather than obscured" (p. 287). But they do so in the hope of producing a "substantive consensus" (p. 287) which may be impossible given present inequities in wealth and power. Even though they point to the existence of an upper class and suggest that corporations, in particular, have far too much influence, they do not adequately address the issues of domination.

Given these conditions. it is difficult to foresee the creation of a "culture of coherence" in which individuals might come to emphasize the importance of the public good. Certainly the answers given by those interviewed for *Habits of the Heart* do not bolster one's faith since, as Bellah et. al. indicate, "it is not clear that many Americans are prepared to consider a significant change in the way we have been living. The allure of the packaged good life is still strong . . ." (p. 294). Moreover, people had difficulty conceiving of events beyond the orbit of their immediate control within a moral framework. A majority were concerned that their pursuit of private success would be seriously jeopardized under conditions in which genuine community prevailed. The fear of dependence, if not tyranny, was linked to the creation of a more integrated society. An interest in politics was too often a reflection of the desire "to protect one's hearth and home and one's decent friends and neighbors from the evils of a mysterious, threatening, complicated society composed of shadowy, sinister, immoral strangers" (p. 185). Many subscribed nostalgically and unrealistically to the idea of resurrecting the small town. Among those who advocated an "urban cosmopolitanism," rootlessness was unwittingly encouraged as most subscribed to a therapeutic ethic which stressed the

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importance of "a wide array of dyadic relationships" (p. 187). A few of those interviewed were committed to the public good insofar as that was defined by professional experts. Unlike Bellah et. al. who constantly warn of the dangers of "adminstrative despotism," those who held this view advocated "carefully worked out expert solutions applied in an atmosphere of tolerance bred of easy mobility" (p. 210). An even smaller number became "professional activists" who, though sensitive to the problems of the poor, were generally unable to account clearly for the nature of their moral commitments. The larger "common good" or "public interest" became obscured as specific issues were addressed. Here, however, unlike with the majority of those interviewed who were less politically involved, there was some understanding of "the large scale forces and institutions shaping their lives" (p. 199). Bellah et. al. conclude that most people in America think "about politics in terms of a consensual community of autonomous, but essentially similar, individuals" (p. 206). The poor and minorities tend to be left out of such a picture, just as genuine social and cultural differences are generally overlooked: "There is no rationale here for developing public institutions that would tolerate the diversity of a large, heterogeneous society and nurture common standards of justice and civility among its members" (p. 185).

Conversely, most Americans are unable to view subjectivity in the context of the richness and complexity of social reality. The urgency with which the authors call for a renewal of interest in the social order is a reflection of their humane intentions. Nevertheless, their solutions to the problems posed by the excesses of American individualism are not convincing. If they are generally quite comprehensive in their analysis, at times they do not explore the issues sufficiently.

*Habits of the Heart,* nevertheless, is a compelling portrait of the fragmented nature of American society. It is also a sensitive account of the yearning for connection that many experience but do not articulate with sufficient clarity. Under today's conditions, as Bellah et. al. suggest, genuine forms of subjectivity are unlikely to flourish, and the social order itself may be jeopardized. The fact that many of those interviewed felt "that sometimes their very best efforts to pursue their finest ideals seem senseless" (p. 199) does not bode well for the future. Avoiding an apocalyptic tone, the authors do not dwell on the ultimate dangers of American individualism. By encouraging a widespread disengagement from issues of grave public importance, current proponents of this ideology may lead us unwittingly into an economic and military crisis of unparalleled severity.

**Robert Ehrlich**

Mark Cousins and Althar Hussain, *Michel Foucault.* (St. Martin's Press: New York, 1984), Paper, $11.95.
Karlis Racevskis, *Michel Foucault and the Subversion of Intellect.* (Cornell University Press: Ithaca, 1983), $19.50

How is the poor quality of the secondary literature on Foucault to be explained? Of course, this does not imply that all works on Foucault are bad: Dreyfus and Rabinow's

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book[1] is of high quality, as is that of Cousin and Hussain. However most other studies of Foucault are simply not very good. Beginning with Alan Sheridan's paraphrase of the Foucaultian corpus,[2] extending through Lemert and Gillan's *Michel Foucault; Social Theory as Transgression,*[3] and ending, for now, in Racevskis' Lacanian reading of Foucault, this short tradition in scholarship has included much which would have better remained unwritten. These works are typically expository in nature. They tend to be celebratory and uncritical. They often over-use past tense "accomplishment verbs," e.g. "Foucault established . . ." or "Foucault undercut . . ." They usually lack any focus beyond recounting the history of Foucault's thought and, given Foucault's views on "the author," they tend to be naively outlined. Moreover, in these histories, Foucault's arguments themselves do not appear, except by implication when their results are announced and ratified. In short, these books are often written in a mythological voice, as a record of the deeds of some great hero.

Both books under review here fail to give a correct account of Foucault's method of genealogy, and this failure is both a symbol and a result of their general failure to take Foucault as a serious writer who made a significant contribution, but who also often made mistakes or was simply wrong. Because the authors of these books fail to critically assess the arguments Foucault advanced against humanism, especially in *The Order of Things,* they fail to understand genealogy. The mythological style adopted by Foucault's critics results in the obfuscation of the "heroic" act itself, the attack on humanism, and of its results, the promised land of genealogical analysis.

To understand this attack, it is important to understand "humanism." Racevskis' presentation of this basic point is typically confusing. At one point he describes humanisms as "momentary and contingent cohesions of sense perceptions. They are like pieces of tapestry constantly woven and rewoven, since they always unravel." (p. 37) Cousins and Hussain have a much clearer understanding of humanism as a group of theories "which locate the human-subject — a human endowed with specific capacities and attributes — as the source of social relations, [making] it the fount of meaning, knowledge and action." (p. 252) However, while this definition is infinitely better than Racevskis', it is both incomplete and misleading. It is incomplete because it fails to mention that for the most important form of humanism the "capacities and attributes" which humanists have found to be important are connected to our power of reason, and that this power is thought to be universal, unchanging and directly accessible. Humanism is closely connected to the idea of a rational essence of man.

Cousins and Hussain's definition is misleading because it presents humanism as a theory rather than as part of a practice, and makes Foucault's relation to it seem merely antagonistic, and his opposition, merely theoretical. This is reinforced by the organization of their book. Cousins and Hussain begin their history of Foucault's thought in the middle, with a discussion of *The Order of Things,* giving pride of place to Foucault's arguments against the various humanistic philosophies, when in fact this argument is secondary to his discussion of the "normalizing disciplines."

Foucault's work is dominated by the now-common idea that the human subject is a function of social practice. What is unique about Foucault is his belief that what are sometimes called "the helping professions," the various therapeutic, humanistic or

1. Hubert Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow. *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics,* (University of Chicago Press: Chicago, 1982).

2. Alan Sheradin. *Michel Foucault: The Will to Truth,* (Tavistock Publications: New York, 1980).

3. Charles Lemert and Garth Gillan. *Michel Foucault: Social Theory as Transgression,* (Columbia University Press: New York, 1982).

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normalizing practices and their attendant sciences, play a central role in the formation of "human essences." The focus of Foucault's analysis is on the role these normalizing disciplines play in this process. Therefore, his interest in humanism is as it relates to the study of these disciplines. Moreover, his interest is not merely theoretical, as Cousins' and Hussain's treatment implies.

The relation between these normalizing disciplines and humanism is, however, complex, and therefore Foucault's treatment of humanism should be equally complex. Not only do disciplinary practices interact with humanism in a variety of ways, but humanism acts in an ideological fashion, to disguise the functioning of these practices. Therefore, in order to study these disciplines, Foucault must first unmask them. This unmasking could be done, of course, by arguing that humanism is false. It is possible to read *Madness and Civilization* as the first move in an argument against humanism. To do so is to risk mythologizing Foucault — writing as if he always consciously opposed one enemy — but, given that the idea of rational essence is so closely associated with humanism, and given that his discussion of madness is directly relevant to the notion of rational essence, such a reading is not entirely distorting. Even if it does attribute to the young Foucault a positon he only arrived at later — a mistake that Foucault constantly warned against — it will make the presentation of the later works easier.

Foucault establishes through his historical account that the conception of madness has changed radically in history, and that this change is in part a function of social changes — changes seemingly irrelevant to madness — in law, morals, medicine and criminology. These changes in "madness" are relevant to the argument against humanism because, Foucault argues, we define our rational essence through negation — in this case the physical exclusion of the insane. The practices that define and administer madness, at the same time, act on our "rational faculty." We administer rationality through our conception and treatment of madness.

Together, these points might be thought to constitute an argument against humanism. The tie between madness and reason and the changing character of madness indicates a similar mutability in our rational faculty. Reason, therefore, cannot be thought of as an essential, unchanging characteristic of humanity. Moreover, if rationality is socially constructed, then society is logically prior to human nature and humanism is false.

This argument is not conclusive. Two responses are possible. First, a characteristic other than reason is essential. Second, even though the manifest character of reason is changing, it does so, according to the dictates of an underlying rationality which is merely using social forces to accomplish its ends. This "Hegelian" position could even be filled out using Foucault's work. A humanist could agree with Foucault that the normalizing disciplines indeed play a central role in the development of humanity in modern societies, but are responding to the advances of the social sciences. If these advances can be explained and justified in terms of an appeal to some rational faculty, then, once again, society can be explained by an appeal to human nature. Human nature is not directly related to society. This relation is mediated by the social sciences and the normalizing disciplines.

This "epistemological humanism" underlies the modern philosophies that Foucault attacks at the end of *The Order of Things*. This position concedes to Foucault the importance of these disciplines and the weakness of "simple" humanism. Epistemological humanism, however, still makes use of the notion of human nature, and, according to Foucault, is unable to adequately explain society. Moreover, epis-

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temological humanism's explanation of that "superior" part of society, the social scientists and professionals in the normalizing disciplines, fails in two ways. First, it will be unable to explain the form of the course of development of that superior part of society, as that part is merely the expression of some deep human essence. Second, it will be unable to explain the origin of the power of that part, as it pretends that its power arises magically out of knowledge and truth. Epistemological humanism blinds the humanist to the operation of the humanistic disciplining institutions. As these institutions are the very thing that Foucault wants to study, he must disabuse his readers of the humanistic illusion. Foucault must distance us from humanism, especially epistemological humanism. In short, the point is to make of humanism an object of study.

Foucault is *not* engaged in any kind of constructive epistemological task. He is merely shaking us loose from our obsession with epistemological questions so that he can analyze normalizing disciplines. Foucault's "epistemological apparatus" — especially the term "epistemes" — should not be taken as part of a positive theory. Their function is limited to Foucault's critical task. Foucault says in *The Archaeology of Knowledge,* that it was intended ironically, and that it is used to "reveal . . . a quite different task. A task that consists of not — no longer — treating discourse as groups of signs . . . but as practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak."[4]

Foucault turns toward the social analysis of human nature, social science, and knowledge. Foucault's account of these subjects will not differ from the account of any other social product. He will allow no transcendental explanation of any social phenomena. Despite this rejection of transcendental appeals, his intent is not to argue that these sciences are false; quite the opposite. The social sciences may be true in the sense that they roughly correspond to their object. They do so, however, not because they are guided by an epistemology that invariably produces knowledge about the independent external world, but because they play a role in constituting their object.

Foucault analyzes the self-conception of the human sciences, not their truth. He attacks their claim to provide their own foundations. But Foucault's attack faces problems. The typical philosophical attack on foundationalism creates a dilemma. It must either be launched from a position external to the foundations or must originate internally. For the external attack to succeed, its position must be defended. Of course, that implies that the critic's position is itself well-grounded, and merely recreates the same problem on a new terrain. On the other hand, if the attack is launched internally, as a *reductio ad absurdum,* while it might be successful, its force is limited to the position assumed. The critic cannot show that foundationalism itself is wrong, merely that this attempt fails. Finally, any attack on foundationalism may lead to a relativism which undercuts all intellectual projects. To avoid these problems, Foucault needs to attack foundationalism from a position that does not itself demand foundations, with an argument that will have broad scope, but will not lead to relativism.

Foucault's response is clever. His major attack on epistemological humanism is a psychological one. *The Order of Things* is less an argument than a form of therapy. In brief, Foucault argues that the "human sciences" play a dual role in the modern episteme; they appear as sciences among other sciences and as the foundation for all knowledge. The human nature which they discover through empirical investigation also will be used to justify knowledge. Philosophy's task is to show how this is possible

4. Michel Foucault. *The Archaeology of Knowledge,* (Harper Torchbooks: New York, 1972), p. 49.

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in what Foucault calls a transcendental-empirical analytic. Foucault argues that all modern philosophy, from Marxism to Phenomenology and Positivism are attempts to show that knowledge can be grounded in human nature. Hence, modern philosophy is part of the humanist tradition.

Foucault believes that the task assigned to modern philosophy is an impossible one. Curiously, Foucault lacks serious argument at this stage. Neither the problem, nor why Foucault thinks it is unsolvable is clear. Important modern philosophies are characterized as irretrievably humanistic and dismissed in the span of several pages. But the critical reader is left ill at ease. Foucault does not offer any argument for the impossibility of this philosophical project and his arguments against each particular philosophy are too weak to be satisfying. How are we to understand Foucault's weak discussion?

Epistemological humanism, Foucault believes, is parasitic on the human sciences. He writes that the human sciences are characterized by: "themes of an individual who lives, speaks, and works in accordance with the laws of an economics, a philology, and a biology, but who also, by a sort of internal torsion and overlapping, has acquired the right, through the interplay of those very laws, to know them and to subject them to total clarification — all these themes so familiar to us today [are] linked to the existence of the 'human sciences,' [which study] a being whose nature (that which determines it, contains it, and has traversed it from the beginning of time) is to know nature, and itself, in consequence, as a natural being."[5] While the human sciences show how human limitations, or 'finitude,' produce its objects, modern philosophy shows how finitude produces knowledge: "At the foundation of all empirical positivities, and existence, we discover a finitude — which is in a sense the same [as those limitations discovered by the empirical sciences] . . . ; and yet it is radically other: in this sense the limitation is expressed not as a determination imposed on man from outside (because he has a nature or a history), but as a fundamental finitude which rests on nothing but its own existence as fact, and opens on the positivity of all concrete limitation.

Thus, in the very heart of empiricity, there is indicated the obligation to work backward . . . to an analytic of finitude, in which man's being will be able to provide a foundation in their own positivity for all those forms that indicate to him that he is not infinite. And the first characteristic with which this analytic will mark man's mode of being . . . will be that of repetition — of the identity and difference between the positive and the fundamental."[6] According to Foucault the modern philosophical problematic is found in the notion that empirically discovered human limitations are also transcendental foundations of the possibility of knowledge. The task of philosophy during the modern period is to perform an "analytic of finitude," to show in detail how these limitations (these "positivities") can serve as a justifying philosophical foundation of knowledge (as "fundamentals").

At this point one might expect that Foucault would present an argument that would conclusively show that "positivities" can never be "identical" with "fundamentals." However, the reader will search in vain for such an argument. Instead of a philosophical argument, what we find is a psychological "therapy." Instead of an argument that the analytic of finitude is essentially flawed, we get an analysis of the social function which this project serves.

The clue to this analysis can be found in Foucault's use of the term, "repetition," which he borrowed from Freud's *Beyond the Pleasure Principle.* In that work Freud dis-

5. Michel Foucault. *The Order of Things,* (Vintage: New York 1972), p. 310.
6. *ibid,* p. 315.

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cusses the compulsion to repeat, which he believes to be the foundation not only of play and of some neuroses, but also of successful therapy. It is Foucault's view that the attempt to complete the analytic of finitude is such a compulsion. "Heralded in positivity, man's finitude is outlined in the paradoxical form of the endless; rather than the rigour of a limitation, it indicates the monotony of a journey which, though it probably has no end, is nevertheless perhaps without hope."[7] Foucault's history of humanistic philosophy, inadequate as a philosophical account, makes sense as a history of a compulsion in which a central theme, that of identity, is rehearsed first in one form and then in another.[8]

However, repetition in itself is not neurotic. Only if the repetition did not accomplish its goal would it be neurotic. Controlled repetition, which Freud referred to as a transfer neurosis, is necessary to the true understanding of the compulsion and to its cure.[9]

If Foucault is to cure us of the humanist compulsion to ground knowledge in our essence, he must not only describe this compulsion as a compulsion, but, in order to convey a "sense of conviction [in] the correctness of the construction that has been communicated,"[10] he must allow the audience to repeat the attempt to identify the positive with the fundamental. To this end, Foucault presents a new repetition in the guise of the most popular form of humanism (at least in Paris in the late sixties), structuralism.

Foucault's therapeutic strategy gives *The Order of Things* its structure. Essentially, Foucault presents a structuralist account of the history of knowledge and then demonstrates its inadequacies. Although the various discrete epistemes, discovered in this historical investigation, determine the form of knowledge during the various periods — thus qualifying as empirically discovered positivities — they are unable to serve as fundamentals precisely because of their discontinuous nature. The plurality of epistemes, and their incommensurable nature, demonstrate that they cannot act to ground knowledge. Foucault's "structuralism without structure,"[11] if accurate, would show that a structuralist epistemology entails relativism and therefore fails in terms of the humanistic project.

I am stressing that Foucault's argument is not part of a larger, philosophical argument against humanism: Foucault intends neither to generalize it, nor to incorporate it into a string of such arguments to build an inductive argument against humanism. Rather, it is part of a "therapeutic" strategy to force the reader to distance himself from the various philosophies of humanism. His goal is not to show that these epistemologies are wrong, but to show that they are "warped and twisted."[12]

Foucault adopted this line of attack for several reasons. First, by offering this psychological treatment of humanism, he is able to produce a broad criticism, without raising the philosophical problem of relativism or of his own philosophical position. Second, his line of attack has the advantage of already treating humanism as part of a social institution which shapes our interaction with the world. As such, humanism is a subject for Foucault's analysis of normalizing disciplines. Moreover, it seems only appropriate that Foucault, that critic of our therapeutic age, should offer a psychologi-

7. *ibid,* p. 314.
8. Dreyfus and Rabinow, *op. cit.,* pp. 41-43.
9. Sigmund, Freud. *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (Bantam Books: New York, 1959), pp. 38-39.
10. *ibid,* p. 39.
11. Jean Piaget. *Stucturalism,* (Basic Books: New York, 1970), p. 134.
12. *The Order of Things, op. cit.,* p. 343.

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cal critique of humanism. To offer a standard philosophical analysis of humanism would leave untouched and unexamined the desire to ground knowledge. Such an analysis would simply repeat again the compulsion, without gaining understanding or mastery.

While Foucault's critique may free us of the humanist temptation, it has limitations. First, it does not even attempt a full refutation of humanism. Foucault has tried to show that humanism is unreasonable, not false. Second, it does not show that there is anything wrong with the content of the human sciences. Foucault does not show that these sciences rest on a mistake or are poor guides for the prediction of behavior. Foucault's arguments only show that the human sciences' relation to their subject matter is not what they suppose — it is constitutive rather than descriptive — but this does not make them false. Finally, the argument does not establish a new philosophy — it is almost entirely destructive.

*The Order of Things,* if successful, would clear the field of the humanist project, and would thereby free the normalizing disciplines as social objects, to be studied and explained in a manner similar to other social structures. One consequence of this new perspective, which Foucault develops in his later works, is that the distinction between knowledge and social power, which plays such an important role in humanistic theory, must be modified. A new notion of social power, as productive rather than repressive, as dispersed rather than hierarchical, and as constitutive of the subject and of knowledge rather than as external to them, is central to Foucault's notion of genealogy, which he defines as a "form of history which can account for the constitution of knowledges, discourses, domains of objects, etc., without having to make reference to a subject which is either transcendental in relation to the field of events or runs in its empty sameness throughout the course of history."[13]

In the course of conducting these genealogical analyses, Foucault has discovered several heuristic rules. The first is to beware of the claims supporting both the dominant mode of social organization and its "radical opposition." Opposition is not always what it appears to be. This point is central to Foucault's discussion of sexuality and sexual revolution.

Foucault also warns against the idea of "liberation." Power, for Foucault, is omnipresent. The notion of complete freedom is part of the humanistic theory of the self-constituting subject. The analysis of power must be done, not in terms of global strategies (as humanism would have it), but in terms of the micro-tactics of power, tactics which can make use of such oppositions and dreams of utopias to establish control. These insights or rules are entirely preliminary, the detailed analysis of power has only just begun. The consequences of this analysis have yet to be determined.

The problem with the mythological style of 'criticism' is that because it does not examine his arguments, but merely reports their conclusions, those conclusions will be misunderstood. Because the two books here reviewed adopt this style of criticism, they misunderstand Foucault. This is not to say, however, that the two books are of equal value.

Cousins and Hussain have produced one of the better commentaries on Foucault. Their book can serve as a nice introduction to his work. It is well written and avoids the temptation to paraphrase which has proved irresistable to so many commentators. Moreover, they are willing to follow Foucault into some of the more obscure corners of his thought. Their discussion of the classic age and the Port Royal grammar is the best

13. Michel Foucault. *Power/Knowledge,* Colin Gorden ed. (Pantheon Books: New York, 1980), p. 117.

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I've seen. Their discussion of Foucault's relation to Descartes, always an important topic in the discussion of a French author, is unique and illuminating. However, the authors impose upon themselves several limitations — not always observed — which lead them to several significant misconceptions.

Cousins and Hussain have tried to write an expository book, which attempts to explain Foucault with a minimum of reference to external events or texts. Moreover, they focus on explaining Foucault's positions, rather than his arguments. As a result, they fail to understand his positions. This failure is especially evident in the concluding chapter in which the authors criticize Foucault. Their criticism begins with a "preliminary assumption" that human beings are not as plastic, as subject to social determination, as Foucault thought. The origin and import of this point is, however, entirely lost on me. Are the authors disputing Foucault's anti-humanism? Or his opposition to epistemological humanism? On what grounds? They give no clue, for they immediately turn to another criticism. As it stands, this "criticism" is a mere reassertion of the position that Foucault attacks. If the authors had taken the trouble to analyze Foucault's attack, to develop counter-argument, their point might be more clear and more valuable. As it stands, however, their objection seems disconnected from their exposition and from Foucault's text. This is one price of the mythological style.

Their second criticism is that the status of "genealogical criticism" is highly ambiguous and seemingly unrelated to the "current struggle." They present genealogical criticism as aimed at undercutting the social sciences by showing their "ignoble origins." The authors believe that Foucault argues that such genetic criticism would show the truth claims of these sciences to be false (p. 264). However, as they correctly point out, such an argument is invalid. Thus, they conclude, "genealogical" criticism is no substitute for direct "epistemological" criticism; and that genealogy is of little value to the project of liberation (p. 265). Their criticism, however, far from uncovering problems in Foucault's thought, is completely misdirected. First, genealogies were never intended to show that the human sciences were false. Rather, they were meant to replace the misleading humanistic self-conception. Second, Foucault's criticisms of the human sciences certainly were never intended to denigrate them because of their "ignoble origins." If Foucault's arguments were so narrowly *ad hominen*, he would not warrant study.

Cousins and Hussain's point that the political import of genealogical analysis is unclear, is much better taken. However, Foucault did not just fail to make himself clear, rather he was unclear about this point himself. Having become aware of the mystifications of power, the real function of opposition and the dangers of utopianism, Foucault placed himself in a position of exaggerated suspicion, from which no political program flows. I think Foucault, recognizing this, decided to work out his theory of power and worry about the political consequences later. That he lacked a philosophy of power, an ethics and a political program, in part accounts for the difficulties in his style. The ironic character of his texts, which extend, at least, through "The Discourse on Language," his unwillingness to directly confront political questions and present political programs, his lingering in history, and his stress on methodological questions, all point to an unease and an uncertainty concerning the ultimate political consequences of his work. These rhetorical devices allow him to continue working on what is clearly an incomplete and somewhat risky project. No doubt, he hoped that his political uncertainty would be overcome in the time that this style allowed him. Unfortunately that style also leads to many misunderstandings.

Racevskis' book is a monument to these misunderstandings. Not content with one

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difficult author, Racevskis attempts to use Lacan to interpret Foucault. The results should be left to the imagination. The book fails to clarify anything. It is full of Lacanian jargon and overblown rhetoric. One example of the latter is worth quoting: "[This] critique is self-consciously radical and takes the form of a theoretical terrorism, engaging in a violent rhetorical campaign aimed at the foundations of Western civilization. At the same time, it voids all other radicalism, past and present, considering them revolutionary only in the cyclical sense of the term. The epistemological history of our culture is . . . a spiral-shaped evolution of three distinguishable stages. . . " (p. 152). Not only is the book written badly — in the best heroic style — but, for all intents and purposes, it traces Foucault's deeds only through the archeological period, giving only the slightest nod to the later writings. Thus, Foucault appears to be a philosopher of discourse, rather than an analyst of power.

Foucault is partly to blame for these misinterpretations. His ironic style — originally adopted to criticize epistemological humanism, and maintained in order to hold off addressing the political consequences of his analysis — leads to the heroic style of interpretation. The most unfortunate consequence is that it has so far prevented writers from using and developing Foucault's insights. In effect, Foucault has only outlined a domain and method of study. His work will be worthless if not continued in a critical manner. Foucault's analysis could be extended to other normalizing disciplines, by developing the political consequences of this program, or by tackling some problems raised by Foucault's work.

One such problem is the 'validity' of Foucault's arguments. Do they do what they are intended to do? I have some strong reservations about them. However, this is not the place to go into this matter. Another outstanding problem, to which Cousins and Hussain make reference, is the relationship between the micro-analysis of power, found in the later works, and the "ideology of humanism," the subject of the earlier works. Foucault's relation to humanism in the earlier works is negative: He is trying to break the power of this ideology. However, he cannot continue to treat it as mere ideology. It clearly plays a larger role in the social sciences and normalizing disciplines. It not only disguises these sciences, but it shapes them. This constructive role of humanism needs to be examined. What is needed is a genealogy of humanism, a history of how this idea, that accounts for its development and functioning within these sciences, without reference to such transcendental objects as epistemes. In short, archaeological criticism must be replaced by genealogical analysis.

To undertake such a project is to take Foucault seriously. Such work may ultimately lead to the rejection of Foucault's position. If this happens, then at least Foucault would have received the respect that he deserves, the respect denied by the mythological approach. At the end of their book, Cousins and Hussain quote Foucault as writing, "The only valid tribute to thought such as Nietzsche's is precisely to use it, to deform it, to make it groan and protest. And if commentators say that I am being faithful or unfaithful to Nietzsche, that is absolute of no interest" (p. 265). Gilles Deleuze, in a conversation with Foucault, reinforced this point; "If no one uses a [theory] . . . then the theory is worthless."[14] Mythologizing Foucault's work, like hiding art in museums, prevents us from using it and drains its value. We need fewer mythological, heroic studies of Foucault and more critical reactions and extensions.

**Roger Paden**

14. Michel Foucault. *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice,* Bouchard, ed. (Cornell University Press: Ithaca, 1977), p. 208.

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Alan Ritter, *Anarchism: A Theoretical Analysis* (Cambridge University Press, 1980), 187 pp.
Michael Taylor, *Community, Anarchy and Liberty* (Cambridge University Press, 1982), 184 pp.
David Miller, *Anarchism* (J.M. Dent & Sons, 1984), 216 pp.

Anarchism has not been well served by the academy, but if the books under review are any indication, perhaps things are changing. Alan Ritter's *Anarchism: A Theoretical Analysis* and Michael Taylor's *Community, Anarchy and Liberty* both make original contributions to anarchist theory, while David Miller's *Anarchism* constitutes a thorough and competent introduction to the subject.

Ostensibly providing an analysis of classical anarchist theory as developed by Godwin, Proudhon, Bakunin and Kropotkin, Ritter has in fact achieved a modest conceptual breakthrough. Anarchism has been traditionally conceived as the most uncompromising libertarian ideology, completely opposed to all limitations and constraints on human freedom. Yet, anarchists are prepared to endorse various coercive social practices, notably public censure, in order to maintain order in anarchist society. Using this apparent contradiction as his starting point, Ritter argues that it can be resolved once we realize that absolute individual liberty is not really the central anarchist ideal. Rather, the anarchist ideal can be best described as "communal individuality," a more complex value which Ritter defines as a combination of the "greatest individual development with the greatest communal unity." There is no contradiction in the anarchist advocacy of freedom and censure as both are necessary for the development of communal individuality.

This argument has a certain intuitive plausibility, as anarchists advocate a number of things other than censure which may conflict with absolute individual liberty, such as solidarity and equality. The anarchist conception of freedom is not purely negative either, as it also incorporates the more positive notions of freedom as non-dominating community and individual self-realization. Unless this is recognized much of what anarchists say about freedom alone may appear confused and contradictory.

Ritter provides a wealth of textual evidence in support of his claim, and through this interpretation clearly demonstrates the general coherence of anarchist theory and criticism. Although Ritter limits his discussion to Godwin, Proudhon, Bakunin and Kropotkin, if one examines the writings of other anarchist theorists his thesis holds up remarkably well.

Perhaps the strongest part of the book is Ritter's treatment of the anarchist critique of legal government and the rule of law, arguably the most original anarchist contribution to radical social theory. Ritter argues that if legal government and anarchy are compared on equally ideal grounds, anarchy must be deemed more free. Laws are by their very nature too general and inflexible to deal most fairly with particular social problems, and their enforcement is more remote and coercive than the public censure advocated by anarchists. Because people in anarchist society, with their well-developed individuality, will be more amenable to reasoned argument, the need to resort to coercion will be less frequent. Ritter also argues that censure is an unavoidable and necessary part of social interaction necessary for the proper development of individual personality.

Although Ritter presents a plausible argument, he never discusses the problem of how anarchists propose to deal with people who are not deterred by public opinion

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from committing harmful acts. Anarcho-capitalists advocate the creation of private police forces, but the social anarchists who are the subject of Ritter's analysis would reject such an idea. Rather, they advocate the use of some sort of communal direct action to curb anti-social violence and are opposed to the creation of specialized enforcement agencies, seeing them as containing the seeds of a new government apparatus. Whether the direct action advocated by anarchists is less coercive than the use of public or private police forces is a question that Ritter leaves unanswered. One merit of Ritter's discussion is that he shows that, contrary to the claims of their critics (including Michael Taylor as we shall soon see), the classical anarchist theorists were not so naive as to believe that future anarchist society would be completely harmonious and conflict-free, but recognized the possibility of conflict and advocated the use of public censure as the means of dealing with such conflict most approporiate to anarchist ideals.

Ritter devotes separate sections to Godwin and Kropotkin's views of the ideal society, but treats Proudhon and Bakunin's views as essentially the same. This is a mistake, as Bakunin was not only more collectivist than Proudhon but he also regarded Proudhon's ideal of a society based almost entirely on contractual relations as impossible and absurd. Besides overemphasizing the productivist aspects of both thinkers' positions, Ritter implicitly defends Proudhon's sexism, claiming that the patriarchal nuclear family is necessary for the development of psychologically healthy individuals, while the non-sexist and libertarian family arrangements advocated by Bakunin are incapable of providing a satisfactory nurturing environment. This is implausible, as the patriarchal nuclear family is not exactly conducive to the free development of female individuality, and by its very structure it encourages authoritarian character traits and submission to authority. It hardly seems suitable for an anarchist society.

The weakest part of the book is the discussion of anarchist strategies for change. Ritter wastes much space on such inanities as Proudhon's brief advocacy of collaboration with Napoleon III and Bakunin's demand for the abolition of the right of inheritance, without really discussing either thinker's contributions to anarcho-syndicalism, one of the most influential and historically effective anarchist strategies. By limiting his discussion to four anarchists thinkers, of whom only two, Bakunin and Kropotkin, were involved in revolutionary movements, Ritter is prevented from discussing any further contributions to anarchist theory and the actual historical experiences of the anarchist movement, from which many important lessons can be learned.

While Ritter is careful to emphasize the communitarian elements of classical anarchist thought, his own analysis is too abstract and individualistic. Ritter claims that anarchists must reject and oppose even radically democratic organizations, but he does not seem to realize that if individuals are regarded as superior to any obligations they may create and assume in a participatory democratic organization, then they are also superior to any obligations resulting from the free contract and free agreement advocated by anarchists as a means for coordinating social life in an anarchist society. Ritter simply has no coherent account of obligation, and instead relies on a reified view of reason by which individuals in anarchist society will coordinate their activities, with each person engaging in an abstract, quasi-utilitarian calculation to determine the right course of action. Instead of dealing directly with each other as human beings and members of a community, Ritter's anarchists will regard each other as figures in an abstract equation for the realization of an equally abstract ideal. But individuality, being unique to each person, cannot be summed according to some abstract calculation, and such a calculating morality does not seem very compatible with the affective,

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emotional and communal ties advocated by anarchists as central to a meaningful life. Ritter adopts an excessively rationalist approach based on an exaggerated division between reason and emotion and then ascribes this view to the classical anarchists, ignoring the strong romantic elements in their thought which help them, with the exception of Godwin perhaps, to transcend a narrow rationalism and develop a more substantive, critical and nuanced view of reason.

Ritter's abstract approach detracts from the general value of his book. While he discusses the anarchist critique of legal government, there is virtually no discussion of the state as an historically embodied complex of repressive institutions and power relations of which legal government forms only a limited part. The classical anarchist theorists, particularly Bakunin and Kropotkin, rejected the sort of ahistorical analysis utilized by Ritter, and they also focused much of their critique on the state as such, not just the concept of government. Similarly, closely related issues also dealt with by the classical anarchist theorists, such as bureaucracy, class-domination and militarism, are largely ignored. By isolating communal individuality as the key concept in anarchist theory Ritter has made a significant contribution to our understanding of anarchism, but as a thoroughgoing analysis of classical anarchist thought Ritter's book does have its limitations.

The central thesis of Michael Taylor's *Community, Anarchy and Liberty* is that a roughly egalitarian community is necessary to maintain social order in anarchist society, and that such community is not incompatible with individual liberty. He bases his argument on an analysis of actually existing anarchic and quasi-anarchic communities, focusing mainly on "primitive" stateless societies. In these societies, as opposed to the ones which exist only in the imagination of anarchist theorists, social order is maintained through a variety of means, including various forms of social control. These forms of control, Taylor argues, can only function effectively in relatively small communities, so the only kind of anarchism that is *possibly* coherent is some sort of communitarian anarchism.

There are two major problems with Taylor's argument. First, it does not follow that simply because social order is maintained through a variety of coercive social controls in those stateless societies studied by anthropologists that social order in every conceivable anarchist society can only be maintained by similar means. Second, Taylor never provides any arguments to show that anarchists would find these forms of social control any more acceptable than those utilized by the modern state.

Of the four primary forms of social control found in anarchic communities, anarchists endorse two, public censure and withdrawal of cooperation, but would have greater difficulty with the other two, self-help retaliation and witchcraft accusations. While some anarchists may be prepared to support the threat of non-institutionalized violence, it is doubtful that any would endorse the use of superstitious religious beliefs to maintain order in anarchist society. Another source of social order in anarchic tribal communities that modern anarchists would reject is the exchange of women for the creation of binding kinship ties. Except for a few intentional, utopian communities, most of the anarchic and quasi-anarchic communities Taylor analyses are patriarchal in structure.

Besides providing some empirical evidence for anarchist claims that some sort of community is necessary for anarchy, Taylor also shows that the rough egalitarianism necessary for maintaining social cohesion in anarchic communities is not incompatible with recognition of individual needs and differences, and that such recognition does not necessarily lead to differentiation in status and the development of hierarchy,

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as Ritter contends in his analysis of the anarchist critique of social inequality. The weakest part of Taylor's argument is the claim that community is not incompatible with liberty, which he supports by adopting an extremely narrow, negative definition of liberty as freedom from physical interference. He could have dealt with this problem better by using Ritter's argument that liberty is a necessary but subordinate value for the realization of communal individuality.

Taylor spends little time discussing anarchist theory itself. Most of his analysis revolves around the problem of the provision of "public goods" which so preoccupies modern game theorists. He claims that the classical anarchist theorists simply assumed that anarchy requires community and that such community is compatible with individual liberty when, as Ritter shows, they presented a variety of sophisticated arguments in support of these claims, arguments which Taylor himself could have used to good advantage. In his pessimistic concluding chapter on the remote possibilities of anarchism in the modern world, Taylor briefly refers to recent work on participatory democracy, workers control, community and technology, but seems unaware of explicitly anarchist work done on these themes by Murray Bookchin, Colin Ward, Paul Goodman and other contemporary anarchist writers. It is to such writers that one must turn to find anarchist ideas that seem relevant to current concerns.

David Miller, a self-described market socialist, does not attempt to make any original contributions to anarchist theory in his book, *Anarchism*, which constitutes a general, critical introduction to anarchist ideas. Miller deals with both individualist and communist anarchism, and also provides a useful analysis of anarchist attempts at revolutionary change.

It is interesting to compare Miller's analysis of anarchism to that of Alan Ritter. Both agree that individualist anarchism is really an extreme version of classical liberalism, but this led Ritter to exclude it entirely from his analysis. Miller argues that communist anarchism is just "as plainly a version communitarian socialism," so to exlude either on the ground that they are really heretical versions of more well-known doctrines would be mistaken. Ritter denies that communist anarchism is merely an extreme version of communitarian socialism because of the communist anarchist opposition to the state as such, rather than just to the capitalist state. Neither consider Rodolf Rocker and Noam Chomsky's more plausible argument that socialist or communist anarchism represents the confluence of two great political traditions, socialism and the classical liberalism of Humboldt and Mill. From this perspective the problem with individualist anarchism is its inability to understand the authoritarian and coercive nature of modern monopoly capitalism.

While Ritter sees communal individuality as the central communist anarchist ideal, Miller argues that it is "social solidarity," thereby seriously downplaying the libertarian component of communist anarchism. Moreover, contemporary anarchist thinkers, notably Murray Bookchin, are replacing the anthropocentric idea of social solidarity with the more expansive idea of social ecology. Both Ritter and Miller are a bit out of touch with recent developments in communist (or *communitarian*) anarchist theory. Indeed, Miller virtually dismisses Bookchin's "eco-anarchism" in a footnote as a mere gloss on the traditional communist anarchist critique of capitalism, when it not only provides a distinctive critique of capitalism but a critique of the more economistic and productivist elements of classical anarchist theory itself.

Miller's only attempt to get at the theoretical basis of anarchism comes in his chapter on "philosophical anarchism," which he defines as the categorical opposition to all forms of authority. His argument owes far too much to Robert Paul Wolff's analysis in

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his book, *In Defense of Anarchism*, although he also discusses the philosophical anarchism of William Godwin and Max Stirner. Miller's own discussion is marred by his failure to properly distinguish political authority from legitimate coercive power. He implies more than once that political anarchists are willing to accept some forms of authority, but he never makes clear what sort of authority anarchists would accept. They certainly would not grant anyone a right to command and to be obeyed, which is how Wolff defines political authority. What some anarchists are willing to accept is the use of coercion in exceptional circumstances in order to avoid greater evil. But it is an *ad hoc* sort of coercion meted out by individuals rather than by members of an institutionalized political apparatus resembling a state. Ritter has explained why anarchists regard this sort of coercion as less damaging to individual autonomy and community than the organized coercion of the state.

Miller's discussion of individualist anarchism is more successful. He perceptively analyzes how the economic content of individualist anarchism has evolved in response to the development of modern capitalism, while the ideological content remains largely unchanged. Individualist anarchists now advocate a form of laissez-faire capitalism so complete that not only is government interference in the market place abolished, but government altogether. This leads to some rather controversial proposals, such as the creation of private police forces or protection agencies. Miller's criticisms of individualist anarchism are careful and judicious. He draws extensively on contemporary individualist anarchist ideas and thinkers, such as Murray Rothbard and David Friedman, but unfortunately he neglects important individualist thinkers who do not fit into the anarcho-capitalist mold.

The chapter on anarchism and Marxism is a disappointment. Miller formulates the dispute in the somewhat anarchronistic terms of the "idealism/materialism" debate. He focuses on classical anarchist criticisms of Marxism, slighting or ignoring more recent contributions by Bookchin and John P. Clark. For example, Miller claims that Bookchin's critique of Marxism "goes right back to Bakunin" when in fact it goes considerably beyond.

By far the most controversial chapter in the book is the one on "Anarchism, Violence and Terror." Miller's very choice of topic helps to perpetuate the myth that anarchism and terrorism are inextricably linked, when even he admits that in comparison to other political groups the anarchist contribution to terrorism "would turn out to be relatively small." He gets off to a bad start by so defining violence and terrorism that no legal government could ever commit acts of violence or terrorism. Thus, when a police officer in a liberal democracy punches, clubs, gasses, chokes, maims, shoots or even kills someone in the course of his duties, he has committed no acts of violence, while presumably if he does any of these things out of uniform he has. Miller presents no argument as to why the clothes someone happens to be wearing somehow transform brutal violence into something completely different (e.g., "law enforcement"). This is a "moralized" conception of violence by which the quality of the self-same act changes according to the ends it serves ("law and order"). By the same token, anarchists could argue that the physical force they advocate is neither violence nor terrorism because it is morally justified. In either case this would be absurd.

In contrast to Ritter, Miller devotes an entire chapter to a discussio of the relation between anarchism and revolutionary syndicalism. He presents an excellent overview of anarcho-syndicalist theory and practice, focusing on the French syndicalist union confederation, the C.G.T., and the more anarcho-syndicalist Spanish confereration, the C.N.T. What is refreshing in his discussion, and somewhat unusual for an aca-

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demic commentator, is his relegation of the sometime syndicalist fellow-traveller, Georges Sorel, to a footnote.

Although the chapter on anarchism and the New Left contains a useful discussion of the May 1968 events in France and the ideas of the Situationists, it is disappointing in its overall focus. Anarcha-feminism is barely mentioned, while Paul Goodman and Colin Ward, two contemporary writers who unlike the Situationists explicitly draw from the anarchist tradition, are practically ignored. What is most interesting is Miller's acknowledgement of the possibilities of an internal "anarchist critique of the idea of revolution."

In his concluding remarks, Miller offers a defense of the rule of law and nationalism, claiming that the anarchists present no alternative to the nation as a locus of personal and group identity. Both Ritter and Taylor show to the contrary that anarchists do offer an alternative to the national state, and that is community. Miller finally admits that he just finds the "idea of abolishing the state entirely . . . utopian." He does allow, however, that anarchism performs a valuable critical function, and that some anarchist ideas regarding decentralization and the organization of work have some merits.

A common failing shared by all three books is the neglect of contemporary anarchist theory. Only there will one find attempts to answer some of the critical questions raised by these books. Yet, this should not detract from their overall value. Ritter's analysis should form a useful starting point for further study of anarchist ideas. Miller's book serves as a good critical introduction to the theory and practice of classical anarchism, andTaylor has provided a clear account of the problem of maintaining social order in stateless societies. Both anarchists and their critics should find these books informative and stimulating.

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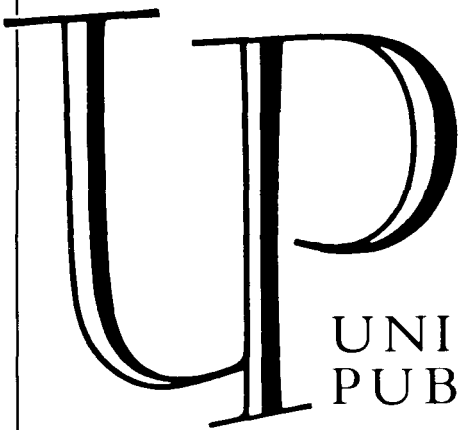

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